Board of Parole chair RB Camacho resigns. PAGE 3
DPS rescues 5 aboard distressed vessel sailing to Saipan. PAGE 7

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Omicron found in the CNMI

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, which is known to be a highly transmissible form of the virus, may have already been present in the Commonwealth as early as December last year.

In a virtual press briefing yesterday, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muña confirmed that samples collected back in December to January have been positively identified as the omicron variant.

It was learned that the earliest sample that was positive identified as the omicron variant was dated Dec. 20, 2021, while the latest was dated Ja. 10, 2022.

However, according to CHCC spokesperson Guill-

See OMICRON on Page 4

Allotment of 3,000 CW permits pushed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Citing a shortage in manpower to perform large-scale projects, among other things, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is seeking the permanent allotment of 3,000 CNMI-Only Transitional

See CW on Page 4

Retirees' bonus boosted to $1K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate unanimously passed yesterday their version of a bill that the House of Representatives recently passed but increased the bonus for government retirees from $500 to $1,000.

See RETIREE'S on Page 4

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING NMC
Public School System teachers collaborate during an activity at one of the recent training seminars conducted by the Northern Marianas College's Community Development Institute and PSS to improve the knowledge and skills of educators needed to address students' learning challenges.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:42pm, Feb. 3, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **99.4%**

Days since last community transmission: **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,728
Fully Vaccinated:	36,573
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,321
Fully Vaccinated:	5,153
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,126

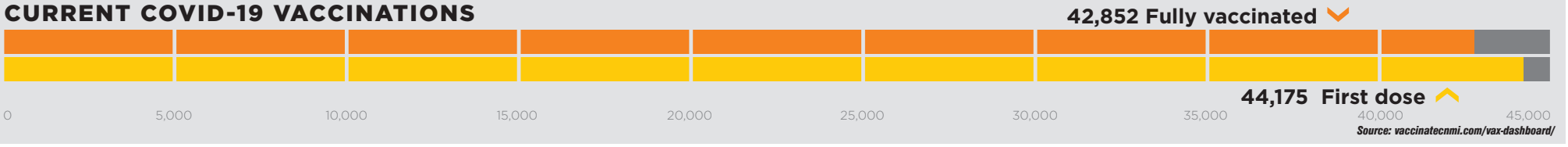
GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	33,878	732	34,610
Recovered	27,402	163	27,565
Active	5,927	732	6,659
Deaths	296	0	296

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	5,314	0*	5,314
Traced via Travel Screening	580	0*	580
Traced via Community Screening	4,734	0*	4,734
Deaths	23	0*	23

*No updates

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

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A memorandum of understanding creates an NMC imprint within the UOG Press.
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BUSINESS
With American hospitals facing a dire shortage of nurses, many are looking abroad.
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WORLD
Many countries are easing their COVID-19 restrictions in what could be another turning point.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

The Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands is an inclusive political organization and in keeping with its bylaws is accepting Nominations of Candidates, and Letters of Intent from any individuals interested in seeking election, for any of these public offices: Senate, House of Representatives, Mayor of Saipan, and Mayor of the Northern Islands. Nominations and Letters of Intent for these offices must be addressed to Nola Kileleman Hix, Chairwoman of the Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands via email at chairwoman@nmidems.org.
All such letters must be received on or before Feb 17, 2022
Visit www.nmidems.org for sample letter and more info

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Local

OPM: Marijuana being legal complicates drug rules, testing

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI government workforce still has a problem with the use of methamphetamine or "ice," according to Office of Personnel Management director Frances Torres Salas Tuesday. Worse, it's even challenging now because of the legalization of marijuana, she added.

This came up after Rep. Denita Yangetmai's (D-Saipan) asked Salas what drugs the OPM is checking among government employees.

In response, Salas said they still have a problem with "ice" use, made slightly worse by the legalization of marijuana. "It's a personal choice, actually. It's a personal choice for these individuals," Salas added during the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation's Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations meeting in the Senate chamber.

ROAD-CLEARING CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Field staff from the Offices of Minority Leader Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) and Precinct 1 Minority Reps. Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan), Joseph Flores(R-Saipan), and Roy Ada (R-Saipan) widen and clear the overgrown vegetation along the access road to San Antonio Community Beach Park, a popular picnic and swimming site for residents and visitors of San Antonio.

Yangetmai, who is a member of SNILD JGO Committee, chairs the House of Representatives Committee on Cannabis.

Salas said OPM's regulations call for the testing of five different drugs: amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, and phencyclidine.

Yangetmai

» OPM director says rules state that marijuana is still not legal for gov't employment

She said they mirror their regulations after the United States, so they test for those five drugs.

Thanking Yangetmai for bringing the issue up, Salas said it's been a challenge because cannabis or marijuana is now legal in the CNMI. However, the she said, employees need to understand that marijuana use is not legal for government employment.

"And I'm sorry, but if they choose to do that, then they might consider working for the private sector," she added.

Salas said their rules or regulations have not changed as far as marijuana is concerned and that they don't plan to change it because it's still illegal at the federal level.

She said the biggest drug testing that they administered in fiscal year 2021 totaled 853 for pre-employment.

Salas said the types of testing they do are drug testing, random, mandatory, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, and follow-up testing.

The director said there's mandatory testing because of the mandatory drug testing law for law enforcers.

"We also do that post accident. Although it's minimal, they still perform it because accidents do happen," she said.

On reasonable suspicion, Salas said either someone saw them actually dealing drugs, or actually had drugs in their possession, and so forth.

On follow up testing, Salas said they have individuals who have tested positive, have gone through the counseling, and have relapsed.

"Therefore, we need to continue the testing every so often, depending on what their counselor or their substance professional recommends," she said.

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) chairs the SNILD JGO Committee.

Infrastructure law focus of first IGIA meeting

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Interagency Group on Insular Areas convened Wednesday its annual meeting with territorial governors, members of Congress, and top government officials to discuss critical infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The session was led by IGIA co-chairs: Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and White House Intergovernmental Affairs director Julie Chavez Rodriguez. They were joined by White House senior adviser and infrastructure coordinator Mitch Landrieu and Interior deputy assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa.

The IGIA convened to discuss the implementation of President Joe Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law throughout the U.S. territories, with presentations led by the departments of the Interior, Transportation, Energy, Agriculture, Commerce and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The IGIA convenes the leadership of the U.S. territories to advance key issues such as climate change, economic development, energy and infrastructure, health, education, public safety, justice, and other issues as prioritized.

The IGIA was established by Executive Order 13537 in 2010 but has not met since 2020 due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants at the hybrid meeting included agency leadership, congressional staff, and senior White House officials representing the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and department of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Transportation, Treasury, Veterans Affairs, and EPA. ***(PR)***

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Board of Parole chair RB Camacho resigns

Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho has resigned from the Board of Parole, where he served a total of 17 years and was its chairman for 15 years, to focus on his campaign for the Saipan mayoral race in the Nov. 8 general election.

Camacho disclosed to Saipan Tribune yesterday that he submitted his resignation letter to the Office of the Governor two weeks ago.

Camacho's term expires this April. Each term as a BOP member is six years.

When asked about the matter yesterday, Torres said he will accept Camacho's resignation. "I also want to thank him for his many years of service on the board and being a chair," Torres told *Saipan Tribune.*

Camacho is hoping that whoever is the new Board of Parole chairperson will consider looking at the BOP's mission.

Camacho has also been serving as chairman of a federal program, Farm Service Agency CNMI Committee, for 11 years now.

Meanwhile, Camacho also clarified yesterday that if the NMI Democratic Party does not have any candidate for mayor, he is asking it to consider endorsing him. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

'Run with the NMI Democrats for good governance'

For the next two weeks, the NMI Democratic Party is accepting nominations of candidates, and letters of intent from any individuals interested in seeking election for any of these public offices: Senate, House of Representatives, mayor of Saipan, and mayor of the Northern Islands.

Nominations and letters of intent for these offices must be received on or before Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022.

Similarly for Tinian and Rota, nominations of candidates, and letters of intent from any individuals interested in seeking election will be accepted for any of these public offices: Senate, House of Representatives, mayor of Tinian, and mayor of Rota. The deadlines for nominations and letters of intent for these offices on Tinian and Rota will be announced at a later time.

All nominations and letters of intent must be submitted to the chairwoman of the Party, Nola Kileleman Hix, via email at chairwoman@nmidems.org.

"We encourage all citizens who feel called to public service, and who share the Democratic Party's commitment to good governance, to join the movement. Help build healthier, safer, fairer, and more beautiful Marianas that we can all be proud of," said Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan), who is the Democratic candidate for governor. "There are many ways to contribute to a better community, and running for public office is one. Submit your letter of intent to join the Democratic slate, or nominate someone you believe in and whose candidacy you would support. [Rep.] Leila [Staffler (D-Saipan)] and I are available to assist any prospective candidate with questions about the party, our platform, and the campaign. Contact us by phone or Whatsapp at 285-3935 or 483-1376, or on Facebook or Instagram."

All nominations and letters of intent timely received by the applicable deadlines will be referred to the party's Credentials Committee for thorough review. Those individuals deemed by the Credentials Committee as meeting the legal, constitutional, and party's bylaw requirements will be considered for nomination at the convention of the Democratic Party of the NMI. The convention will be open to the public. The party will endorse the most qualified and electable candidates. Further details about the Convention will be published at a later time.

Those interested in more information are welcome to contact us at nmidems.sm@gmail.com, or call 484-3367(DEMS). ***(PR)***

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

A public notice is hereby given that Dae Hae Incorporation, with the principal address of P.O. Box 503979, Gatbo Avenue, Dandan, Saipan, MP 96950, has decided to discontinue its business and dissolve permanently.

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The Mobility Space is Getting Greener in the Northern Mariana Islands

The mobility space is getting greener in the Northern Mariana Islands, as Enterprise Saipan announced today that it has acquired hybrid vehicles as part of its fleet of vehicles serving Saipan.

This investment not only supports demand for safe and reliable mobility options during the COVID-19 crisis but also demonstrates Enterprise's commitment to supporting local economies and driving forward environmentally friendly modes of transportation across the islands as they move out of travel restrictions.

Enterprise Saipan also upholds its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness in the car rental industry through theimplementation of the Enterprise Complete Clean Pledge.

The Pledge further enhances cleaning protocols across Enterprise Holdings' brands and comprehensive portfolio of transportation options. This includes vehicle washing, vacuuming, general wipe down, and sanitizing with a disinfectant that meets leading health authority requirements, with particular attention to more than 20 high-touch points.

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Woman accuses local healthcare provider of burning her foot

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A woman is suing a local healthcare provider for burning her foot so severely that it resulted in its amputation.

Pilar Manglona Deleon Guerrero, through her counsel, Michael Dotts, has filed a civil lawsuit against St. Jude Renal Care for negligence, negligent supervision, negligent training, and medical malpractice after a nurse allegedly placed a heat lamp beside her left foot that later left it severely burned, resulting in the amputation of her leg.

According to the lawsuit, Deleon Guerrero, who suffers from Type 2 diabetes, requires dialysis three times a week and has been undergoing dialysis with the St. Jude Renal Care Facility from 2015 to 2020.

During a February 2020 dialysis session, Deleon Guerrero said her lower body felt cold so she asked a nurse for a way to keep warm. However, instead of giving her a blanket, the nurse placed a heating lamp right next to Deleon Guerrero's left foot. Due to the exhaustion Deleon Guerrero experienced while undergoing dialysis, she fell asleep soon after the heating lamp was set up.

Due to her illness, Deleon Guerrero's foot was numb to the point that she does not feel pain. In this case, the heating lamp was allegedly placed next to her foot for an extended amount of time and was not removed for her entire dialysis session, which lasted four to five hours.

"The nurse knew or should have known that Deleon Guerrero experiences no feelings in her feet when the heating lamp was placed close to Deleon Guerrero's left foot," Dotts said.

According to Dotts, none of the nurses or staff at St. Jude gave Deleon Guerrero instructions on how to manage the lamp, when to contact a nurse, or to check on her feet after a certain period of time.

After her session, Deleon Guerrero's left toes were allegedly visibly charred by the heating lamp.

"Due to the numbness in her feet and the fact that she was sleeping through the dialysis session, Deleon Guerrero was not aware that her feet, in particular her toes, were burnt during the dialysis session. She discovered the burn injury at the end of the dialysis session after she woke up. She informed the medical staff and the nurse regarding her burn, but the nurses did not attempt to treat her wound or send her to the hospital, all the while knowing or should have known that her diabetes would create serious complication for the healing of her burn injury," Dotts stated.

On Feb. 24, 2020, Dotts said that Deleon Guerrero went to the Commonwealth Healthcare Center to get the burn checked.

After numerous visits to CHCC, Deleon Guerrero's post-burn foot ulcer was removed on April 1, 2020. Due to complication of her diabetes, the healing process of her left foot was not successful and sometime in April 2020, the top of her second left toe allegedly fell off by itself.

Partial amputation of her left foot was subsequently performed on May 15, 2020.

Deleon Guerrero then had numerous follow-up appointments for her burn injury and amputation from May 2020 to December 2020 at CHCC, but the condition of her left foot did not improve following the amputation, in part due to her diabetes.

On Dec. 29, 2020, the removal of the dead tissue on her left toe was performed, but her left toe did not get better.

On Jan. 7, 2021, an operation was performed to remove her left toe.

On Jan. 12, 2021, the plaintiff was referred to Guam to be seen by a foot specialist.

Due to a series of problems that allegedly originated from the burn injury she sustained at St. Jude, she went into surgery and her left leg below the knee was amputated in Guam on Feb. 22, 2021.

Dotts alleges that the infection that caused the amputation of Deleon Guerrero's left leg spread to her right leg, causing her to undergo amputation of her right leg above the knee.

Soon after, due to her wounds not healing property, both of her legs were amputated a second time. The left leg was amputated a second time above the knee, and the right leg was amputated a second time to her mid-thigh.

OMICRON

From Page 1

ermo Lifoifoi, CHCC has yet to determine whether the samples were collected from inbound travelers or from within the community.

Now that the omicron variant has been confirmed to be present, Muña said the goal now is to prevent further spread within the community.

"With the confirmation of the omicron variant in the community, it is essential for the CNMI to ensure individuals are provided the preventive measures to ensure that one can recover from an infection of SARS-cov-2. Our goal here is to try to get preventive measures and treatment to individuals. We have the therapeutic treatments, and we are also offering testing. Individuals can find out and prevent the spread by getting tested if they have the symptoms and isolating and working, and also getting accessing the services that we have, as well as getting your booster shots. Getting the third dose is essential to preventing hospitalizations and deaths," she said.

Muña added that CHCC will also start closely monitoring hospitalizations because of the significant impact omicron may have.

"We need to monitor even more closely the hospitalizations [because of] how medically significant the virus affects our community," she said.

Stephanie Kern-Allely, the regional communicable disease epidemiologist for the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, who is currently helping CHCC, said that identifying omicron within the CNMI is unsurprising, considering the steep spike in omicron cases seen around the world.

Fortunately, Kern-Allely said, it is believed that omicron is and has had fewer cases of severe disease. However, it is easily transmitted and if it is not controlled, the CNMI faces a huge risk of overwhelming its healthcare system.

"An omicron surge is coming. We're currently seeing the start of it here. We know that it can still cause hospitalizations and death. This is not a toothless virus as it is still the same COVID-19 disease. We know that if we don't control the spread, it can overwhelm our healthcare system. It's really critical to put in place protection measures as well as prevention measures such as accessing vaccination, testing and making choices, isolating and quarantine yourselves as necessary," she said.

"Preventing as many people as possible from that risk is important. We know that increased infections significantly burden the healthcare systems as the total number of hospitalizations rise, as well as other essential services that are operating since individuals employees will have to isolate and have individuals in their household quarantined. And we also know that the more this virus circulates, the more opportunities it has to change and mutate and to come up with new ways to evade systems," Kern-Allely added.

RETIREE'S

From Page 1

It was Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) that offered amendments to House Bill 22-91, HD1, to reflect, among other things, the bonus increase.

Eight senators approved Hofschneider's amendments and passed House Bill 22-91, HD1, in the form of Senate Substitute 1. Floor leader Sen. Vinnie Vinson Flores Sablan (R-Saipan) was absent but was excused from the session.

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) extended her gratitude to Hofschneider for making that amendment, and to the Fiscal Affairs Committee chairman and members for facilitating a substitute bill so the retirees can finally receive their bonus that had been proposed three months ago.

"And with that, we asked our House counterpart to accept our Senate substitute," Santos said.

The House recently unanimously passed the bipartisan legislation, House Bill 22-91, HD1, that would allocate $1.3 million in local funds as a bonus for government retirees.

The House bill proposes to amend the Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2022 to establish a business unit and fund the retirees' bonus.

Hofschneider offered amendments to the bill to correct some of the citations as indicated in the original House legislation to reflect reprogramming and reappropriation.

Last Dec. 14, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres requested the Legislature to allow reprogramming of funds for the sole purpose of funding retirees' $500 bonuses. Last Dec. 15, the Senate adopted Senate Joint Resolution 22-05, which approved the Torres' request.

The House did not act on the Senate's resolution, but instead passed the bipartisan legislation, House Bill 22-91, HD1.

CW

From Page 1

Worker (CW-1) permits to support construction activities in the CNMI.

In remarks that Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig delivered last Tuesday on behalf of Torres before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the governor asked for the U.S. Senate committee's partnership in seeking the permanent allocation of 3,000 CW-1 permits to the CNMI during the transition period of the CW Visa Program. Torres wants the 3,000 permits to be separate from any presidentially-declared disasters in the CNMI.

Atalig delivered the same remarks at the Interagency Group on Insular Affairs meeting in Washington D.C. Torres was unable to personally deliver his remarks after testing positive for COVID-19 last weekend.

Torres said the permanent allotment of 3,000 CW-1 permits is important to deploy funding to support critical infrastructure projects and provide for an additional means to support employment across various sectors of the CNMI's economy.

» Torres says experience, data show that foreign workers aid in the CNMI's economic growth

Under U.S. Public Law 115-218, CNMI employers are restricted from using the CW-1 Visa Program for the acquisition of construction workers for projects not related to a presidentially declared disaster. Torres said this restriction dramatically limits the available manpower to support public infrastructure projects provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as it is not related to a disaster.

Citing the recent CNMI Economic Census, produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, Torres said the CNMI had 2,803 individuals employed in the Constructions Trade. Yet for one project alone, the Tinian Divert Airfield construction by the U.S. Air Force, Torres said this has the potential to require as much as 2,099 construction workers. This, he said, demonstrates the severe limitation on the ability of the CNMI to undertake large-scale and essential developments, the governor noted.

"As increased demands continue to be placed in support of ongoing developments, costs associated with construction will grow rapidly, reducing the efficacy of federal infrastructure dollars and limiting the range of opportunities that would otherwise be available per dollar of investment in the larger United States," he said.

The governor said despite the considerable performance of the CNMI in increasing its U.S. worker percentages, the reality remains that there are not enough workers, let alone skilled construction workers, to support the growth and development of the CNMI economy or its infrastructure.

"With the historic investments across the nation, and with existing labor shortages, recruiting skilled U.S. workers to perform this work 8,000 miles away is even more difficult, costly, and unanticipated," he said.

He said labor acquisition is further impeded by high transportation costs because of the CNMI's geographic location and federal regulations governing air and sea transportation to the islands.

The governor noted that communities throughout the U.S. are experiencing similar labor challenges.

Torres said that, according to the U.S. Home Builder Institute in 2021, a lack of skilled construction labor is a key limiting factor for improving housing inventory and housing affordability, with the research supporting the estimation that the U.S. economy needs 2 million more construction workers in the labor force to meet this demand.

He said it was reported that the nation is experiencing the challenges the CNMI has faced for decades, namely not enough U.S. workers in the labor force to support economic growth.

» Torres says Tinian Divert Airfield project alone potentially requires 2,099 construction workers

Torres said these issues remain present in the CNMI but are vastly more severe and require a distinct set of solutions.

The governor told the committee that the CNMI has taken the mandates of the NMI U.S. Workforce Act seriously, and has made considerable progress for U.S. workers in the economy. Citing data collected from the CNMI Department of Labor and Labor Force Surveys conducted by the Office of the Governor as required under the NMI U.S. Workforce Act, Torres said the Commonwealth now has the highest percentage of U.S. workers in their labor force, earning more per hour than in any other time in recent history.

"This is a monumental success and should represent a new benchmark in our efforts to build a stronger economy and community for our citizens," he said.

Yet, the governor said, progress for the CNMI's labor force and economy have been set back by the global pandemic.

Torres said as tourism arrivals contracted, and restrictions aimed at mitigating the spread of the virus were implemented, businesses closed their doors, leaving thousands of employees in need of assistance.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

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Est. Mileage: 23128, Color: BLUE

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2021 KIA SELTOS LX
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Est. Mileage: 24,988, Color: GRAY

NOW $22,600
2018 HONDA CIVIC EX HB
STOCK # JU204626, FWD, 4-Cyl, Auto
Mileage: 14458, Color: BLUE

NOW $22,600
2020 NISSAN SENTRA
STOCK # LY248933, FWD, 4-CYL, Automatic,
Est. Mileage: 11,988, Color: BLACK

NOW $23,600
2017 KIA SPORTAGE SX
STOCK # H7046774, AWD, 4-Cyl, Turbo, GDI, 2.0L, Auto,
6-Spd OD Sptmatc, Est. Mileage: 32433, Color: BLUE

NOW $23,995
2016 HONDA PILOT
STOCK# GB099963, AWD, V6 i-VTEC 3.5L, Automatic,
Est. Mileage: 48,324, Color: Silver

NOW $23,995
2015 TOYOTA TACOMA CREW
STOCK # FX048706, RWD, 4-Cyl, Automatic
Est. Mileage: 54,100, Color: RED

NOW $24,995
2019 HONDA HR-V SPORT
STOCK # KM701264, FWD, 4 CYL, Auto
Est. Mileage: 32,888, Color: SILVER

NOW $24,995
2020 NISSAN ROGUE SPORT
STOCK # LW273655, FWD, 4CYL, Auto,
Est. Mileage: 4,350, Color: GRAY

NOW $27,995
2018 HONDA ACCORD TOURING
STOCK# JA084004, FWD, i-VTEC Turbo 1.5 L,
AT 10 SPEED, Est. Mileage: 29,268, Color: GRAY

NOW $27,600
2020 NISSAN SENTRA SR
STOCK # LY249008, FWD, 4CYL 2.0 L, AUTO
Est. Mileage: 388, Color: MAROON

WAS $28,995
NOW $27,995
2019 HONDA CIVIC HB
STOCK # KU228086, FWD, 4CYL, AUTO,
Est. Mileage: 16468, Color: RALLY RED

NOW $28,995
2017 HONDA PILOT LX
STOCK # HB091042, AWD, 6CYL 3.5L, Auto
Est. Mileage: 24,500, Color: WHITE

WAS $34,995
NOW $29,995
2016 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LIMITED BLACK EDITION
STOCK # GS134358 FWD, 3.5 L 6CYL,
Auto, Est. Mileage: 16488, Color: BLACK

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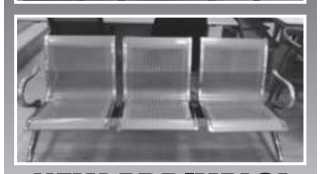
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Marianas Trench Marine Sanctuary status in the spotlight

The CNMI House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee met with over 50 local and federal stakeholders last Tuesday, Feb. 1, to review the nomination for the Mariana Trench National Marine Sanctuary.

Led by Rep. Sheila Therese Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the committee, the Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship Stakeholders meeting featured presentations from Northern Marianas College, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Center for American Progress.

"NOAA is seeking public input…whether the nomination of Mariana Trench should remain on the inventory of sites for potential national marine sanctuary designation," said Babauta. "This meeting was an opportunity for everyone to gather information about the nomination process ahead of the deadline for public comments on Feb. 22."

The Friends of the Marianas Trench Marine Monument nominated the Marianas Trench Marine Sanctuary in 2016 with support from Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres. The five-year nomination was accepted by President Donald Trump in 2017 and is up for review in March 2022.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

House Natural Resources chair Rep. Sheila Therese Babauta (D-Saipan) leads the Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship Stakeholders meeting on whether the nomination of Mariana Trench should remain on the inventory of sites for potential national marine sanctuary designation.

"While the protection of natural resources is a shared priority of both sanctuaries and monuments, there are differences between the two designations. Sanctuaries are created under different federal laws, are managed differently and often take longer to creates than marine national monuments," said Babauta.

She thanked all of the participants and encourages the community to register online (https://nominate.noaa.gov/5-year-review.html) for the virtual NOAA public meeting at 10am on Feb. 12, 2022.

"This is the continuation of a lengthy process that requires a partnership with all of our stakeholders to renew our nomination status and work toward a sanctuary that reflects the best interests of our community," she said.

The House Committee on Natural Resources holds quarterly stakeholder meetings to create a space for natural resources management professionals to address issues that impact all of their respective missions for environmental sustainability and stewardship.

The committee considers and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the House pertaining to the state of the natural resources of the Commonwealth, including long range planning and policies; fisheries and ocean resources; public lands and land taking; housing; building and zoning codes; land management; parks and recreation; water and soil conservation; energy and related matters.

The committee consists of Babauta, vice chair Rep. Denita Yangetmai (D-Saipan), and Reps. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), Richard Lizama (D-Saipan) and Patrick San Nicolas (R-Tinian). ***(PR)***

'Gov't employees hired through ARPA may lose jobs if ARPA money runs out'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Yangetmai

Office of Personnel Management director Frances Torres Salas said early this week that government employees hired through the American Rescue Plan Act are not for permanent positions and that they may go if ARPA money runs out.

Speaking during the Saipan and Northern Islands Delegation- Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations meeting in the Senate chamber, Salas said when the time comes when a limited term appointment expires and if a department feels the need to keep that employee, it's the department's responsibility to plan ahead and migrate that account to a general or local account because there will be no ARPA funds.

This was learned after Rep. Denita Yangetmai (D-Saipan), who is a member of SNILD JGO Committee, asked what will happen to these people hired by the government when the ARPA money runs out. Yangetmai also asked if OPM is making plans on what to do with these workers if there is no more ARPA money.

Salas said that when they have a request for personnel action, they can see whether it is 100% federally funded or ARPA funded. "It's very clear which one is ARPA, which one is not," Salas said.

The OPM director said they have to ensure that both the department and the employee understand that the funds are only available for a specific period of time.

She said these employees are not placed on civil service status but what's called "limited term appointment." Salas said the department and the employee have to be aware that this is not a permanent position.

"And that's where we need to be careful. And we need to ensure that both the employee and the department are aware of that," she said.

The director said it's very clear on the request for personnel action that it's only for limited period of time. "I would say 100% of them are for a year. So come Sept. 30, 2022, depending on how much funding is available, that person may not continue if funding is not there," she said.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-22-002

A&E SURVEY SERVICES FOR THE DANDAN HOMESTEAD WATERLINE AND SERVICE LATERAL REPLACEMENT (W20-074)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Survey Services of the DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement in DanDan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this contract is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this RAESP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government-observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one RASEP package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 19, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAESP-22-002, A&E Survey Services for DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement",** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 8, 2022. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 24, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Mr. Kennet Jann R. Bernardo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email kennet.bernardo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TYPHOON RESISTANT ACCORDION ALUMINUM SHUTTERS
TINIAN SEAPORT BUILDING, TINIAN

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-001-22

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to supply and install typhoon resistant accordion aluminum shutters at the Tinian Seaport Building, Tinian, CNMI. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and or products that cannot be evaluate by cost alone (NMIAC §40-50-225 (a)). The Scope of Work and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning **January 12, 2022**, upon payment of $50.00 in cash, cashier's check or certified check to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport no later than **2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, February 11, 2022**. Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer. Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date

DPS rescues 5 aboard distressed vessel sailing to Saipan

The CNMI Department of Public Safety responded and rescued five people aboard a distressed vessel that was sailing to Saipan last Wednesday.

According to a news release yesterday, DPS received a call last Feb. 2, 2022, at about 2:35pm, about a distressed vessel trying to make its way to Saipan. The DPS *Zodiac 3* rescue boat was launched from the Smiling Cove Marina to respond.

At about 2:58pm, the rescue boat spotted the dual out-board, 78-foot boat with five people on board. The occupants stated that they were okay and that they did not need medical assistance. The rescue boat then towed the distressed vessel to Saipan. At approximately 3:29pm., both boats arrived at the Delta Dock in Lower Base.

Police learned that the vessel had left the island of Tinian for Saipan at about 11:30am. At about 2:30pm, the onboard generator and starboard engine died and wouldn't turn back on. During this time the vessel experienced an electrical shortage. The captain of the vessel then called for police assistance as the vessel was unable to steer with only one outboard motor.

DPS Boating Safety reminds boaters to call the Boating Safety Office at 233-9120 for a complete list of safety equipment your boat is required to have on board. Or feel free to call the DPS front desk at 664-9001 for any other questions.

"We encourage boaters to call Channel 16 on your VHF radio when you need help, or if you would like to report a distressed vessel. If you would like to report a crime or an emergency, call 911 anytime," the DPS news release stated. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

SSC revives Filipino Vesper Service starting Sunday

Saipan Community Church, the first and oldest protestant church in the CNMI, will be reviving its Filipino Vesper Service starting this Sunday, Feb. 6, from 6pm to 7:30pm.

Senior pastor Stephen Dame said the evening service in Tagalog will initially be held every first Sunday of the month during Communion Sunday.

"The Filipino ministry here at Saipan Community Church, has a long and rich history and I believe was the first outreach to Filipinos on the island. People within this ministry and church intervened and assisted those who were being taking advantage of here on the island," he said.

Dame, who arrived on Saipan in December 2020, said Saipan Community Church's Vesper Service stopped when former associate pastor Roger Abe left the island and following the devastation brought by Super Typhoon Soudelor in 2015.

"The Filipino Vesper Service is still seen as a needed ministry. Our attempt to bring it back is to once again bring help and hope to our community by offering a ministry in their language. It is also the desire that the church and this ministry would still be a voice for those in the community who may be marginalized in some way," he added.

Coincidentally, Feb. 14 marks the ministry's 34th anniversary. "It's truly heartwarming as a pastor to be celebrating 34 years since the Filipino Vesper Service began by beginning it once again. With our economic situation on the island due to COVID-19, people have had to work when they could get it. This evening service will allow the Filipino community another opportunity to worship and be with one another that perhaps they were missing," said Dame.

SCC elder Alvin Rebong, an ordained pastor himself, will be speaking at the first Filipino Vesper Service.

"Alvin is well known in our community for his bodybuilding and work as a personal trainer. But he also has a love not just for his own people, but for all. He leads many Bible studies throughout the week and really enjoys sharing the truths of the Bible with others," said Dame.

Rebong believes many of his *kababayans* (countrymen) on Saipan are longing for Tagalog worship service with Tagalog singing and Tagalog sermon.

"Also some of our friends cannot attend worship in the morning because of conflict in their work schedules, thus I am very excited that the Filipino Vesper Service of Saipan Community Church will resume soon. …I strongly believe that we will be able to cater to the needs of our dear *kababayans*," he said.

Saipan Community Church is located along Beach Road in Susupe in front of the Mobil Oil Marianas gas station. It also has a Sunday morning service beginning at 10am. ***(PR)***

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

MVA-RFP-22-2047

Marianas Visitors Authority Tourism Resumption Investment Plan (TRIP)-Airlines

Submission /Closing Date: **February 18, 2022** **Time: 10:00AM ChST**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after February 04, 2022 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00AM-12:00PM and 1:00PM-5:00PM., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-22-2047 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY TRIP-AIRLINES"** in the subject line to lmaratita@mymarianas.com

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

From the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM of the DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DATE: February 4, 2022

NOTICE: The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is currently reviewing a federal negative determination from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding proposed funding for the Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Facility, Rapid Refill Project, at Saipan International Airport. More information about the proposed activity can be accessed via the DCRM website at: https://dcrm.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/crm/CZMA.Negative-Determination.GSN_.ARFF-Rapid-Refill-Project.01-25-22.Signed.pdf.

Federal consistency is a provision of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) that requires federal actions that affect the coastal zone to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of a state's federally approved coastal management program (CMP).

Comments on whether the project is consistent with the enforceable policies of the CNMI's CMP can be submitted to the Division of Coastal Resources Management at fedcon@dcrm.gov.mp.

Public notices are published for compliance with 15 CFR § 930.42. State agencies are not required to provide public notice of the receipt of a negative determination or the resolution of an objection to a negative determination, unless a Federal agency submits a consistency determination pursuant to 15 CFR § 930.34. DCRM is soliciting public comments for fifteen (15) days, starting on February 4, 2022 and ending on February 19, 2022. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your consideration.

COMMONWEALTH ELECTION COMMISSION
"Your Vote is Your Voice"

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

A voter registration drive will be conducted from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on the following dates and locations listed below:

- February 5th – Tanapag Youth Center
- February 12th – Kagman Community Center
- February 19th – Carolinian Utt Pavilion
- February 26th – San Vicente Youth Center

A person is eligible to vote who, on November 8, 2022, is 18 years of age or older, is a domiciled in the Commonwealth, has resided in the Commonwealth for 120 days prior to the day of the election, is not serving a sentence for a felony conviction, has not been declared by a court to be judicially insane, and is either a citizen or national of the United States as defined in the Northern Mariana Islands Constitution.

Previously registered voters who have failed to vote in the 2018 and 2020 General Election must re-register to be eligible to vote in the 2022 General Election. **For first time voters, please provide a Valid US Passport or Birth Certificate.**

Anyone requiring voter registration information may call the Commonwealth Election Commission Office at (670) 235-8683 (VOTE) or email at administrative@votecnmi.gov.mp.

DOL to host virtual career fair

The CNMI Department of Labor will be hosting a virtual career fair on Feb, 25, 2022, from 9am to 11am. It will have the theme "Explore, Expand, Empower."

The link to the career fair is: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86227693383?pwd=RHdqb1gwYitzYndsU2RmRklmemY2QT09

This will be an outreach opportunity intended to provide current and prospective job seekers and entrepreneurs with vital career resources and information. The event will feature speakers from the Northern Marianas College, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, and Island Training Solutions, among others.

"With the ongoing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are conducting the career fair completely online," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente.

Space is limited and on a first-come basis, and attendance does require registration with the CNMI Department of Labor.

For more information, contact the Department of Labor, Employment Services Division:

■ Alice Agulto at (670)664-3190 or email albagulto.dol@gmail.com;

■ Manny Iguel at (670)664-3298 or email manasesiguel@gmail.com; or

■ Vivian Fleming at (670)322-3293 or email dolvfleming@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Novena in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes starts today

The community of Santa Lourdes in As Teo is happy to announce that the annual Santa Lourdes novena in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes will begin today, Feb. 4, 2022.

On the first eight days (Feb. 4-11), rosary and novena will start at 5pm at the Santa Lourdes Shrine. On the ninth day, Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, rosary and novena will start at 2pm, followed by Mass at 3pm at the Shrine.

Attendees are kindly asked to please wear face mask and to practice social distancing. ***(PR)***

Registration now open for Xavier high entrance exam

All current eighth graders in the CNMI who are interested in attending Xavier High School–Micronesia are encouraged to take the official entrance exam at 9am on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, at the Maturana House of Prayer on Upper Navy Hill. Registration is mandatory for all exam-takers, and will close at 12am on Sunday, Feb. 13. To register, visit https://forms.gle/iRG3ER51heLUPoLd9

For more information on Xavier High School–Micronesia, visit https://www.xaviermicronesia.org, or follow @XavierMicronesia on Facebook and/or Instagram. ***(PR)***

Power outage in San Antonio today

There will be a scheduled power service interruption today, Feb. 4, 2022, from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, affecting San Antonio, specifically along Guihan St., Laiguan Av., Hiyok St., Gatdas Av., Kacho Av., Hakmang Av., San Antonio St., Hiteng St., Sesyon Av., Tataga St., Uhang Av., Laggua Av., and Tarakitu St.. ***(PR)***

CPA invites public to town hall meetings

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is hosting town hall meetings to address matters surrounding the 2020 audit report, the passenger facility charges audit, and the litigation history between Star Marianas Air and CPA. The Saipan leg was held yesterday.

■ ROTA: Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022, 6pm in the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport's departure area.

■ TINIAN: Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022, 6pm at the Tinian International Airport's departure terminal.

Persons wishing to make comments may do so in person or may email them to cpa.receptionist@pticom.com by no later than 4pm on Feb. 23, 2022. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-22-010

PROVISION OF OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE POWER PLANT AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ON THE ISLAND OF TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the provision of operations, maintenance, and management services for the Power Plant and Distribution System on the Island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-22-010*, Operations, Maintenance, and Management Services for The Power Plant and Distribution System on the island of Tinian" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Co`de (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 1, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org, and Christie Sablan at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport
"Car Rental Concessions"
CPA-RFP-008-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRR-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport for a period of about two years (contract ends on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-008-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TYPHOON RESISTANT ACCORDION ALUMINUM SHUTTERS AT THE ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE TERMINALS SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-002-22

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to supply and install typhoon resistant accordion aluminum shutters on the windows and doors along the front side of the arrival and departure terminals, Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and or products that cannot be evaluate by cost alone (NMIAC §40-50-225 (a)). The Scope of Work and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning **January 12, 2022**, upon payment of $100.00 in cash, cashier's check or certified check to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport no later than **2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, February 11, 2022.** Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer. Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

PORT OF SAIPAN SOUTH SEAPLANE RAMP PAVING & DRAINAGE
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-19

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Port of Saipan South Seaplane Ramp Paving & Drainage, Project No. CPA-SS-001-19.

The project is being funded by CPA and is in compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri N. Llagas as cpa.receptionist@pticom.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Friday, February 4, 2022.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: January 12, 2022

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"
CPA-RFP-007-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRS-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of approximately two years (contract to end on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-007-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022,** at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

USAF to conduct flight operations throughout the month

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Air Force is conducting flight operations on Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Farallon de Medinilla this month as part of its Cope North 2022 exercises.

According to a statement from the CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, and the Commonwealth Ports Authority, the group of USAF officers came in last Sunday and they will remain here for the month of February to perform Cope North 2022 exercises. They were greeted at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport by members of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force.

Cope North 2022 is a multilateral U.S. Pacific Air Forces field training exercise focused on a Combat Air Force large-force employment operations, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations to demonstrate mission readiness and interoperability between Japan Air Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Air Force, and the U.S. Air Force.

The joint statement informs CNMI residents of active military aircrafts within the Mariana Islands and to not be alarmed.

"This joint public advisory is issued to inform members of the public not to be alarmed of increased sightings of military aircrafts associated with this multinational exercise, to include limited cargo vessel movements into the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota. All COVID-19 mitigation measures are in place and fully enforced," it stated.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the U.S. Air Force undergo COVID-19 entry protocols last Sunday. They will remain in the Marianas for the month of February to conduct flight operations

US Navy appeals Hawaii order to drain military fuel tanks

HONOLULU (AP)—Attorneys for the U.S. Navy on Wednesday appealed Hawaii's order that it drain massive tanks that store fuel in the hills above Pearl Harbor, saying the state wrongly concluded the tanks posed an imminent threat that requires immediate action.

A complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Honolulu asks a judge to stop the order.

The motion said the Navy hopes to resolve its differences with Hawaii through negotiation but filed a complaint anyway because of time restrictions under Hawaii law.

Attorneys for the Navy filed a similar motion in state court in case a federal judge decided not to act on its complaint, the filing said.

Hawaii last month ordered the Navy to drain its tanks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility after fuel leaked from the complex into a drinking water well and contaminated tap water at Pearl Harbor homes and offices.

Thousands of people have been treated for physical ailments and 4,000 military families are staying in hotels because of the leak.

The defendant in the case, the state Department of Health, didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige issued his emergency order on Dec. 6. The Navy appealed, prompting the state Department of Health to hold a hearing to consider the challenge. The department's deputy director then issued a final order on Jan. 3.

The Navy said last month it would comply with the final order but on Monday Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks said it would appeal. Doing so would give the military time "to make evidence-based and transparent decisions," she said in a statement.

Wednesday's complaint said the Nov. 20 leak of fuel into the Navy's drinking water system was an emergency. It outlined steps the Navy took to address this emergency, including providing bottled water, laundry service and alternative housing to those affected.

But it argued that the state failed to present evidence that the Red Hill facility itself presented an "imminent peril."

It said the Department of Health failed to give the Navy sufficient opportunity to present evidence and argue whether such imminent peril exists.

There would be plenty of time for the Navy to negotiate with the state after it removes fuel from the tanks, said David Henkin, an attorney for Earthjustice, the group representing the Sierra Club of Hawaii, which intervened in the case as an interested party.

"It is now time for the Navy to stop fighting the emergency order, which seeks to remove the existential threat that the Red Hill facility poses to Oahu's people," Henkin said. "If the Navy won't voluntarily defuel the Red Hill tanks, we will vigorously defend the emergency order in court."

Henkin said he would also fight to keep the case in state courts that have the authority to interpret Hawaii law.

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Google shouldn't know where you are if you don't want it to

Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google. For most of us, not a day goes by without interacting with one of their products or services. In 2022, whether we want to or not, Big Tech is a part of our lives.

With that dominance growing, it is up to the government to remain vigilant against these corporations abusing their power.

A good example of that watchdog role are the recent lawsuits by four state attorneys general, including Washington AG Bob Ferguson, against Google for violating user privacy.

The bipartisan group—which also includes the District of Columbia, Indiana and Texas—alleges that Google employs deceptive practices, making it "nearly impossible" for users to avoid sharing their location data.

The tech giant uses that information to target ads, denying consumers the ability to choose, and to track sensitive location data to make a profit, Ferguson said in a statement.

"Google kept tracking individuals' location data even after consumers told the corporation to stop," he said. "This is not only dishonest—it's unlawful."

The company promised users that if they turned off location history, any place they visited would no longer be stored, but according to the lawsuit, even when consumers opted out of location tracking through that setting, Google recorded their whereabouts via other means.

That discrepancy was first noted in 2018 by The Associated Press, which found that while Google is generally open about asking permission to use location information, some Google apps automatically stored time-stamped location data without asking.

The AP discovered that location was used by weather updates on Android phones or stored by simply opening the Google Maps app. Even some searches unrelated to location, such as "chocolate chip cookies," would pinpoint the user's precise latitude and longitude.

That's a complete disregard for privacy—and a violation of the Washington State Consumer Protection Act—all so that Google can sell you some Chips Ahoy.

This is not the first lawsuit against Google that Washington is a part of, nor has Google been the sole target. Big Tech is now facing a host of legal challenges from bipartisan coalitions of state attorneys general, as well as increased scrutiny by the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. It's about time.

For too long, little to no regulation was the default setting for the internet's development and growth. This allowed for innovation to flourish through the rise and fall of tech players big and small, but today's undisputed dominance of a few companies—and their monopolistic power to stifle competition—show that is no longer the case.

Litigation is an important part of keeping these companies' worst impulses in check, but strong action by regulators, as well as legislation from Congress, is also needed. Big Tech can—and does—play a positive role in our lives, but we must be able to dictate the terms for the good of all.

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The monster that ate time

By LYNN SCHMIDT
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Lynn Schmidt is a columnist and Editorial Board member of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

How times have changed. Maybe it's not so much the times that have changed but how we have changed during these times. Two years ago, we would never have imagined how the coronavirus pandemic was going to change the way we spend, perceive and talk about time.

Physicists define time as the progression of events from the past to the present into the future. Living through a pandemic, we can reflect on the past and what we did pre-pandemic, bide our time in the present, and look forward to a future when we no longer fear the coronavirus.

Every year the American Time Use Survey, overseen by the Labor Department, asks thousands of people to track every minute of a single day. It measures the amount of time people spend doing various activities, such as paid work, child care, sleeping, volunteering and socializing. Most years, the data reflects the ways that changes in technology, society and the economy subtly shift how we spend our days. In 2020, the data highlighted the ways our use of time was abruptly disrupted. Interestingly enough, even the time-use survey's work was interrupted. Data collection was paused in mid-March 2020 because of the coronavirus outbreak and did not resume until mid-May 2020.

The data from 2020 shows Americans slept more, completed more housework, spent more time playing games, texting, video chatting and watching television, movies or videos. People spent more time cooking, except for 15- to 24-year-olds. Not surprisingly, we spent less time grooming. The percent of employed persons working at home nearly doubled, rising to 42% during the pandemic in 2020. Average travel time, such as commuting to work or driving to a store, decreased for all demographic groups.

And we all spent more time alone.

Average alone time increased for all demographic groups, all age groups, and persons living in households with and without children or others.

For the most part, children are back in school, and college students are back on campus. The changes that occurred in the workforce seem to be here to stay. According to Gallup polling, 45% of full-time U.S. employees worked from home either all (25%) or part of the time (20%) in Gallup's September 2021 update of its monthly employment trends, and 76% of the remote workers surveyed said their employer will allow people to work remotely going forward, at least partially.

The human brain, with a region responsible for circadian rhythms, is equipped to track time. Time perception, on the other hand, is a subjective experience to each individual. Individual perceptions of time can be affected by outside factors or events. A pandemic can be one of those factors.

Scientists at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston set out to see if danger makes people experience time in slow motion. They found that indeed, time does seem to slow down during emergency situations or danger. When a person is scared, a brain area called the amygdala, which makes memories, becomes more active, laying down a more intense set of memories that go along with those normally taken care of by other parts of the brain. During times of danger, the amygdala becomes more active. As more memories form, time seems drawn out. One of the researchers, David Eagleman explained, "In this way, frightening events are associated with richer and denser memories. And the more memory you have of an event, the longer you believe it took."

Anecdotally, the years 2020 and 2021 have blurred together for me. It is almost as if the two years are a unified block of the present, instead of being two separate calendar years marking time.

There also seems to be an overarching feeling that this pandemic will never end. We are hanging on with hope that this future will be here soon.

The television series "The Walking Dead" is based on the comic book series with the same name created by Robert Kirkman. It is the story of survivors of a zombie apocalypse. Characters changed the way they talked to one another about time and frequently asked one another, "What did you do 'before'?" In our real-life crisis scenario, how many times have we asked each other, "What were you doing pre-COVID?"

I have also noticed that our vernacular around the pandemic has changed. We have begun to mark the time with the dominant variant. The coronavirus was how we described the initial virus. Then came delta and now omicron. My family is hoping we don't make it through the Greek alphabet with new variants.

Dolly Parton once said, "Adjusting to the passage of time is a key to success and to life: just being able to roll with the punches."

Adjusting to the passage of time is a key to success and to life in a global pandemic: just being able to roll with the variants and talk about the before times.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The Marianas' Festival Island invites the community to the 18th Annual Tinian Pika Fest

TOGETHER, WE CAN
By EDWIN P. ALDAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Edwin Aldan is the 14th mayor of the island of Tinian and Aguiguan. He has served the Marianas for several years as a police officer, a House representative, and a member of the Tinian Municipal Council. As Tinian mayor, he is committed to leading the mission to foster safety, cleanliness, and equal opportunity for all residents.

For as long as I can remember, Tinian has been known as the hot pepper island where the hottest donne' Sali grows. Donne' means "hot pepper" and Sali refers to a local blackbird that feeds on the tiny hot peppers. Off-island visitors who have tried Tinian's donne' Sali would come back for more or request it from Tinian residents and businesses. As a result, Tinian has been known as the donne' island, making the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, or Pika Fest, our biggest annual celebration. Pika Fest will take place on Feb. 19-20 at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose.

It's fitting that Pika Fest pays homage to the very small but potent donne' Sali, which is indigenous to Tinian. Stories passed down from generations state that the hot pepper is hotter than others because the Sali bird eats and expels the seeds that grow the pepper plants.

For those who have not experienced Pika Fest in person, we invite you to join us this year for an unforgettable weekend. The festival features a wide variety of international and local cuisine enhanced by donne' Sali. We host many fun competitions, such as the kadun pika cooking challenge, cha-cha dancing, burger eating, tug-of-war, crab (umang) race, canoe race, sack race, the Pika bike race, a fishing derby, and the crowd's favorite, the hot pepper eating contest. The Marianas' best entertainers will perform all weekend long. Local artisans will be showcasing their arts and crafts, and food vendors will be selling all sorts of spicy and sweet treats.

Though much has changed in the past two years, I look forward to welcoming back off-island guests. It brings me great joy to see them enjoying everything Tinian has to offer so they can spread the word about our warm Tinian hospitality. Let's work together this year to make our villages and schools safer for our children. I also look forward to the boost in our local economy.

Each year, Pika Fest serves as the kickoff event for Marianas Visitors Authority's signature events, which motivates us to improve each year. We work hard to ensure our decorations are beautifully displayed, our vendor booths are in good shape, and our guests feel welcome and comfortable during the festivities. We also add new activities each year to keep Pika Fest exciting for all.

Transforming Tinian

We are working closely with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers to do our part in transforming the Marianas into a world-class destination. My staff has been working diligently to revamp and enhance some of our most visited tourist sites, maintain our public parks and facilities, and add amenities to existing sites. There's a lot to be done, but we know this will benefit our people.

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS

Our first project was to improve one of the famous beaches on the island, Taga Beach. It is one of the most photographed sites on the island, and we decided to build a sign that would stand out and improve the beach-side photo experience.

We are excited about working with the council to further strengthen Tinian's role in the Marianas Multi-Island Destination experience through the Public Private Partnership program. We held our first PPP project with GCEA at the Housing Basketball Court last summer, and it was a huge success. Community members and leaders worked together to revitalize the court, and the children were able to enjoy the improved court immediately afterward.

The Tinian Elementary School Youth Advisory Panel was the first school to join the Marianas Village Pride campaign and committed to adopting the sidewalks across from the campus. They will paint and maintain the sidewalks to make them safer for students. It is exciting to see these young kids taking ownership of our community. I highly encourage more schools to participate in the upcoming Bus Stop Decorating contest and adopt medians and sidewalks around their schools.

The positive COVID-19 cases may have delayed our MVP projects, but we are ready to move forward to make more improvements throughout the island. After the two devastating typhoons, our schools are still trying to recover. We still need to clear debris, fix broken buildings, and take care of other maintenance issues. The MVP Campaign is the first step to inspiring change in attitude and empowering each other to make our islands better places to live now and for future generations to come.

For more information, visit the GCEA at cnmieconomy.com, on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

Does Sarah Palin, infected with COVID, put New York diners in danger? You betcha!

By ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

Robin Abcarian is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.

What is the matter with Sarah Palin?

After COVID-19 vaccines became available, the former Alaska governor and tea party favorite announced she'd get one "over my dead body."

On Jan. 22, two days before jury selection was to begin in her federal defamation lawsuit against *The New York Times*, she was photographed dining indoors at Elio's, an Italian restaurant on Manhattan's Upper West Side, a blatant violation of New York's mandate, which requires indoor diners to show proof of vaccination.

Little did her fellow diners suspect they might be getting a side of COVID with their carbonara.

On Jan. 24, Judge Jed Rakoff announced he would postpone the court proceedings to Feb. 3 because Palin had tested positive, three times, for the coronavirus. "She is, of course, not vaccinated," said the judge.

Of course not.

So did Palin quarantine responsibly for five days, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines?

Or did she go rogue?

Does a moose poop in the tundra?

On Jan. 25, she was spotted dining outdoors at Campagnola, another old-school Italian place on the Upper East Side.

On. Jan. 26, she returned to Elio's, and this time sat with companions in a heated outdoor area.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams asked that any New Yorkers who had come into contact with Palin get tested for the coronavirus.

"By repeatedly flouting CDC guidelines, Ms. Palin has shown a complete disregard for the health and safety of small-business workers and her fellow patrons," said the mayor's spokesperson.

She could have ordered takeout, of course. Except on Planet Palin, if you haven't noticed, attention is oxygen.

She hasn't generated these many headlines since she dressed up as a giant pink teddy bear and performed Sir-Mix-a-Lot's "Baby Got Back" on "The Masked Singer," footage Palin made clear in a court document that she does not want the jury to see because it might cause "unfair prejudice and confusion."

This, by the way, is her second bout of COVID. The first time around, last March, she urged people to mask up and use common sense "to avoid spreading this and every other virus out there."

Perhaps New Yorkers are not entitled to the same level of respect that Palin has for her fellow Alaskans.

I really hope the judge addresses her cavalier behavior when the trial gets underway.

Barring a pretrial settlement, a federal jury will determine whether she was defamed in 2017, when *The New York Times* ran an editorial bemoaning what it described as a link between inflammatory political rhetoric and gun violence. The piece wrongly drew a line between the January 2011 mass shooting that wounded then-U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and a map, circulated by Palin's political action committee, that had targetlike crosshairs on congressional districts the GOP wanted to win back from Democrats. Giffords' Arizona district was among them.

Immediately after the shooting, there was a lot of overheated partisan blather about the connection between Palin's map and the mayhem in Arizona. In her lawsuit, Palin claims that while such "rank speculation was quickly dispelled," it led to "the end of her position as a Fox News political commentator, influenced her decision not to run for President of the United States, and tainted her personal and professional image."

I should note that her contract with Fox ended in 2015, and her flirtation with a presidential run in 2012 was just that. An editorial that ran in 2017 would seem to have no bearing on either outcome.

But I digress.

Obviously, it was wrong of *The Times* to connect the two events. The gunman, who killed six people and wounded 13 including Giffords, had been obsessed with the congresswoman for years and was described by friends as not particularly engaged in politics.

The Times quickly corrected its editorial—twice—but Palin wants a full retraction.

In her lawsuit, she claims the editorial caused "damage to her reputation, humiliation, embarrassment, mental suffering, shame and emotional distress."

Was it the same kind of distress, one wonders, that former President Barack Obama may have felt when she accused him of "palling around with terrorists" in 2008 when she was the running mate of Republican presidential nominee John McCain?

Or when she accused Obama of wanting to create a "death panel " as part of his landmark health care reform law?

To prevail, Palin will have to meet the very high bar that was established by the Supreme Court in the landmark 1964 case *New York Times v. Sullivan*.

Public figures who allege defamation, said the court, must show that a report was wrong and harmful to their reputation. But they also have to prove that a publication acted with "actual malice," meaning it knowingly published a falsehood or displayed a reckless disregard for the truth. Newspapers, in other words, are allowed to make honest mistakes.

Palin is about as public a figure as it gets; in her lawsuit, she notes that she was named one of *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World" and was also listed as one of the Smithsonian Institute's "100 Most Significant Americans of All Time."

Some free speech experts fret that if the case makes it to the U.S. Supreme Court, the conservative supermajority may weaken the tough standard that was established in *Sullivan*. In reporting about Palin's lawsuit, *The New York Times* pointed out last week that Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil M. Gorsuch have both expressed antipathy toward the *Sullivan* standard.

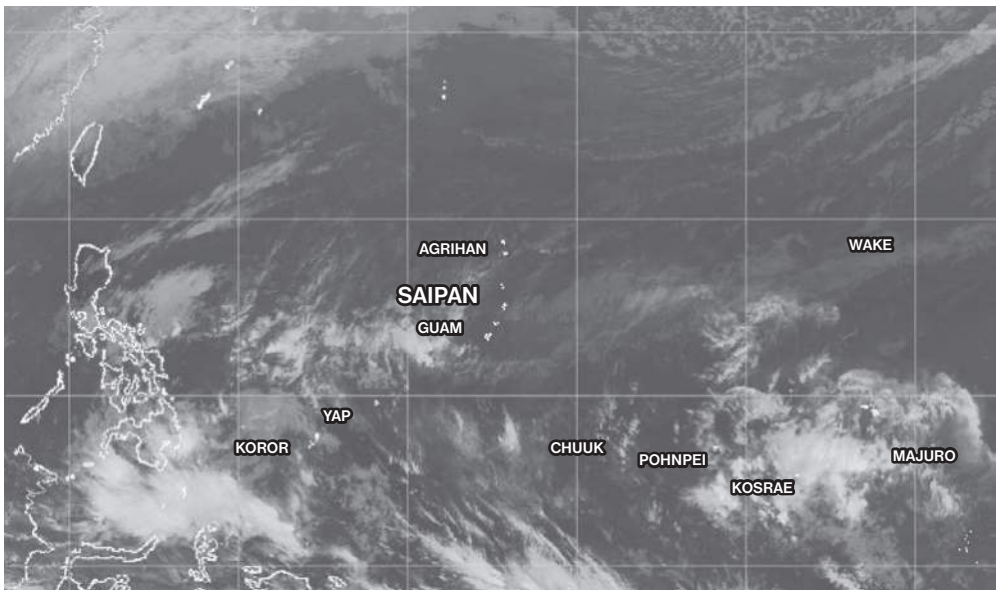
I hope Palin loses her case. Not just because the *Sullivan* standard is a bedrock of my profession, but because I don't really believe she has been seriously damaged by one wrongheaded editorial.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly sunny. Scattered light showers in the morning, then isolated light showers in the afternoon.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mp.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Lows in the mid 70s.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. H
85º 76º	85º 76	85º 75º	85º 75º	85º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:36 AM, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Latest surf observations indicate choppy east to northeast swell is generating a high rip current risk along east and northeast facing reefs. This high current risk along east facing reefs is expected to persist through Friday night before diminishing for the weekend.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	29 / 24 °F
Palau	Partly Cloudy	30 / 25 °F
Yap	Isolated Thunderstorms	26 / 25 °F
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	29 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	Cloudy	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	29 / 27 °F
Majuro	PM Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:45 AM	18:16 PM
Saturday	06:45 AM	18:16 PM
Sunday	06:44 AM	18:17 PM
Monday	06:44 AM	18:17 PM
Tuesday	06:44 AM	18:18 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	09:04	21:12 PM	-
Saturday	09:43	22:03 PM	-
Sunday	10:20	22:53 PM	-
Monday	10:57	23:42 AM	-
Tuesday	11:34	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy 25 / 20 °F
Beijing	Sunny 2 / -8 °F
Hong Kong	AM Clouds/PM Sunny 17 / 11 °F
Honolulu	Sunny 27 / 19 °F
London	AM Rain 10 / 3°F
Los Angeles	Sunny 21 / 6 °F
Manila	Mostly Sunny 32 / 24°F
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny 24 / 123
Miami	Mostly Sunny 26 / 20 °F
New York	Rain to Wintry Mix 6 / -7 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy 8 / 2 °F
Paris	Showers 11/ 3 °F
Busan	Sunny 8 / -3 °F
Rome	AM Clouds/PM Sun 15 / 8 °F
Salem	Showers 14 / -1 °F
San Francisco	Sunny 16 / 6 °F
Seoul	Mostly Sunny -1 / -12 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy 8 / 2 °F
Washington, DC	Rain 11 / 85F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
03:55 AM	Low Tide	-0.40
10:37 AM	High Tide	1.78
4:34 PM	Low Tide	0.73
9:37 PM	High Tide	1.66

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 2)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	3, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 2)
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	3, 7

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

UOG Press launches Northern Marianas College imprint

Delegates from the University of Guam and Northern Marianas College on Saipan gathered on the UOG campus last Tuesday to formally sign and celebrate a memorandum of understanding that establishes an NMC imprint, or division, within UOG Press.

The imprint will publish peer-reviewed works about the Northern Mariana Islands and/or by authors from the NMI with a dedication to expanding accessibility to knowledge about the island chain and sharing the knowledge, wisdom, and creativity of its people.

"The University of Guam and the Northern Marianas College each have a legacy of building up island communities through their academic programs, including by creating educational resources about Micronesia's history and culture," said Monique Storie, dean of university libraries at UOG. "With this agreement, we are able to combine our efforts in ways that respond to our respective communities' interests, expand our educational reach, and help the world to know more about these islands that we call home. The possibilities of this agreement are exciting."

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

From left, Annette T. Santos, dean, School of Business and Public Administration, University of Guam; Monique Storie, dean of university libraries, UOG; Anita Borja Enriquez, senior vice president and provost, UOG; Thomas W. Krise, president, UOG; Galvin Deleon Guerrero, president, Northern Marianas College; Frankie Eliptico, vice president of administration and advancement, NMC; Sharleen Santos-Bamba, interim vice provost for academic excellence, graduate studies, and online learning, UOG; and Carlos Madrid, director of research for the Micronesian Area Research Center, UOG.

Storie joined UOG president Thomas W. Krise and senior vice president and provost Anita B. Enriquez and other UOG administrators in welcoming NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero and NMC vice president of administration and advancement Frankie Eliptico to the UOG campus for a signing ceremony and tour of UOG Press.

The partnership embodies the University of Guam's 70th anniversary theme of "Transforming Lives, Advancing Communities" and advances a key initiative of the university's Para Hulo' Strategic Plan of partnering with organizations and institutions regionwide to improve all aspects of community life.

Under the new imprint of UOG Press, NMC plans to publish one title per year along with an annual journal that will feature academic and literary writing and artwork from NMI authors and artists.

"We hope to give voice to the community's shared experience of surviving and thriving despite tragedy and trauma," Deleon Guerrero said. "In other words, having sailed through turbulent waters, the college's proa now sails ahead with a focus on learning, lifting the tide for everyone."

The imprint and the annual journal are still at the beginning stages of their development, and further details for how NMI authors and artists can submit their work will be forthcoming.

For additional information regarding this partnership, follow UOG Press on Facebook and Instagram, or contact Via De Fant, marketing and communications coordinator for UOG Press, at defantv@triton.uog.edu or (671) 735-2153.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

From left, Anita Borja Enriquez, senior vice president and provost, University of Guam; Thomas W. Krise, president, UOG; Galvin Deleon Guerrero, president, Northern Marianas College; and Frankie Eliptico, vice president of administration and advancement, NMC.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Northern Marianas College president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, left, tours the UOG Press and Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam on Feb. 1 with MARC director of Research Carlos Madrid. During the visit, the two schools formalized an agreement to create an NMC division of UOG Press that will publish peer-reviewed works about the Northern Mariana Islands and/or by authors from the island chain.

About UOG Press

University of Guam Press is a publishing house under the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. Using a peer-review process, UOG Press publishes literary works to advance regional scholarship, develop cultural literacy, and expand accessibility to knowledge about Micronesia. Since the press was revived in 2015, it has produced more than 55 publications and journals and sold more than 40,000 books under its major publishing imprints of MARC Publications and Taiguini Books. The books are available for sale in local bookstores and at www.uogpress.com. ***(UOG)***

USDOL recovers $23,000 in back wages for 8 workers in Pago Pago

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—A federal investigation recovered $23,358 in back wages for eight employees of a Pago Pago employer who failed to pay eight workers for work performed before and after their scheduled shifts. The employer required the work but failed to record the time and pay for the hours. Additionally, the employer illegally deducted meal breaks and lodging costs from worker's pay.

» Solid Corp. failed to pay overtime, made illegal deductions

Investigators with the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division found Solid Corp.—an enterprise consisting of Worldwide Cash Station, Worldwide Car Rental and Worldwide Tours & Travel Inc.—violated the Fair Labor Standards Act when it failed to pay for all hours of work and for made improper deductions. The division also determined the employer did not combine hours worked across multiple locations and failed to keep accurate records. The failure to count hours worked before and after shifts and to combine hours worked at multiple locations resulted in overtime violations when employees worked more than 40 hours per week.

"Solid Corp. failed to record, count and pay workers for all their time they worked and shortchanged them of their lawfully earned wages," said Wage and Hour Division district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu. "The employer also did not combine all hours worked by staff at their various locations throughout the workweek for overtime purposes. We encourage all employers to review their pay practices and to contact us for information about how to avoid violations."

The Wage and Hour Division is committed to protecting and enhancing the welfare of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fiscal year 2021, the division helped more than 190,000 workers and recovered more than $230 million in total back wages.

For more information about the FLSA and other laws enforced by the division, contact the agency's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Learn more about the Wage and Hour Division, including a search tool to use if you think you may be owed back wages collected by the division. Workers can call the Wage and Hour Division confidentially with questions—regardless of their immigration status—and the department can speak with callers in more than 200 languages. ***(PR)***

MCS Theatre Club marks 25 with staging of beloved musical

Mount Carmel School's Theatre Club concludes its celebration of 25 years with its closing performance of the hit Broadway musical *The Sound of Music.*

Despite having to reschedule their original performance dates, Mount Carmel School still performed two back-to-back sold-out performances at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Ballroom on Jan.y 26 and 28, 2022.

The production was also made possible with the support from the CNMI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and the CNMI Council for Arts and Culture with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Sound of Music—performed with music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, as suggested by *The Trapp Family Singers* by Maria Augusta Trapp—was presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization.

Captain George von Trapp, played by Manuel Pangelinan, and Maria Rainer, played by Bernice Sabino, share a heartfelt moment on stage. MCS

Max Detweiler, portrayed by longtime Theater Club member Brent Ortizo, expresses that he "likes the way he lives when he lives with rich people." MCS

Liesel von Trapp, portrayed by senior Tessie Rose Schweiger, seeks advice from her new governess, Maria Rainer, portrayed by Bernice Sabino. MCS

Bernice Sabino shows off her singing and acting skills as she yodels in a scene featuring the song *The Lonely Goatherd*. MCS

Liesl von Trapp, portrayed by Tessie Schweiger, and Jared Terlaje, as Rolf Gruber, grapple with Liesl's impressionable age as they perform *Sixteen Going on Seventeen*. MCS

Maria Rainer, played by Bernice Sabino, calls on the Lord for guidance as she faces challenges. MCS

The Nonnberg Abbey nuns sing *Morning Hymn/Alleluia* to open *The Sound of Music.* MCS

Bernice Sabino pretends to strum a guitar as she teaches the von Trapp children the ABCs of singing in *Do-Re-Mi.* MCS

The von Trapp children are called to attention by their father, Captain George von Trapp, played by Manuel Pangelinan. MCS

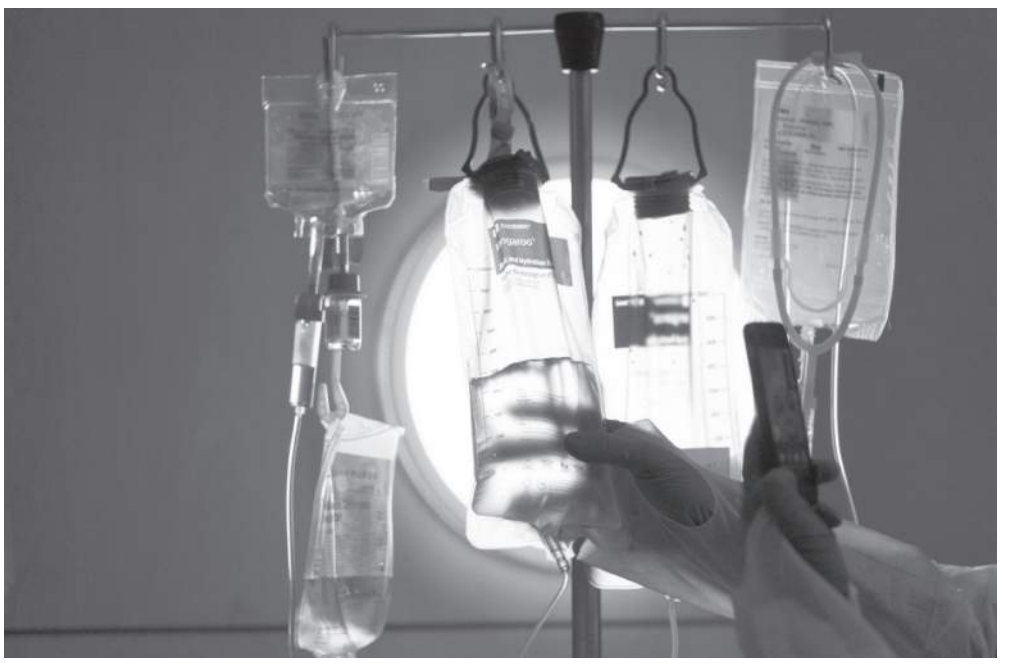
Captain von Trapp resists the efforts of members of the Nazi regime, played by Matthew Sablan and Carlo Diaz. MCS

Captain von Trapp inspects the makeover Maria Rainer has given his children while he was away. MCS

Max Detweiler, played by Brent Ortizo and Elsa Schraeder, played by Malina Tenorio, brainstorm on how she can court Captain von Trapp into marriage. MCS

Business

US hospitals seek foreign nurses amid visa windfall



AP

A nurse checks on IV fluids while talking to a COVID-19 patient at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Los Angeles, Dec. 13, 2021.

By AMY TAXIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

With American hospitals facing a dire shortage of nurses amid a slogging pandemic, many are looking abroad for health care workers.

And it could be just in time.

There's an unusually high number of green cards available this year for foreign professionals, including nurses, who want to move to the United States—twice as many as just a few years ago. That's because U.S. consulates shut down during the coronavirus pandemic weren't issuing visas to relatives of American citizens, and, by law, these unused slots now get transferred to eligible workers.

Amy L. Erlbacher-Anderson, an immigration attorney in Omaha, Nebraska, said she has seen more demand for foreign nurses in two years than the rest of her 18-year career. And this year, she said, it's more likely they'll get approved to come, so long as U.S. consular offices can process all the applications.

"We have double the number of visas we've had available for decades," she said. "That is kind of temporarily creating a very open situation."

U.S. hospitals are struggling with a shortage of nurses that worsened as pandemic burnout led many to retire or leave their jobs. Meanwhile, coronavirus cases continue to rise and fall, placing tremendous pressure on the health care system. In California alone, there's an estimated gap of 40,000 nurses, or 14% of the workforce, according to a recent report by the University of California, San Francisco.

Hospitals are filling the gap by hiring traveling nurses, but that can be expensive. And hospital administrators say not enough nurses are graduating from U.S. schools each year to meet the demand.

Some hospitals have long brought nurses from the Philippines, Jamaica and other English-speaking countries, and more are now following suit. And both longtime recruiters and newcomers are trying to take advantage of the green card windfall before the fiscal year ends in September.

The U.S. typically offers at least 140,000 green cards each year to people moving to the country permanently for certain professional jobs, including nursing. Most are issued to people who are already living in the United States on temporary visas, though some go to workers overseas. This year, 280,000 of these green cards are available, and recruiters hope some of the extras can be snapped up by nurses seeking to work in pandemic-weary hospitals in the United States.

The Biden administration, which has made moves to reverse Trump-era policies restricting legal immigration, has taken some steps to try to help foreign health care workers so they can assist with the pandemic. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said it would speed the renewal of work permits for health care workers, which could help keep some foreign citizens already in the United States on the job. The State Department told consulates last year to prioritize applications for workers at facilities that are responding to the pandemic, an agency official said.

Faith Akinmade, a 22-year-old nurse from Nigeria, is among those hoping for a quick solution. After completing college in the U.S., Akinmade has been working as an ICU nurse for University of Louisville Hospital in Kentucky. But her work permit is set to expire in March. She said she needs it renewed, or her green card approved, to stay on the job.

"At this point and time, I just feel like I have faith that at the end of March something is going to show up to continue to work," Akinmade said. She said the issue affects many of her international colleagues as well as domestic ones, who may be pressed to take on shifts for colleagues if their immigration paperwork doesn't come through.

Dr. Roxie Wells, president of Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital in Raeford, North Carolina, said she started trying to bring over foreign nurses before the pandemic, but it wasn't until last year that these recruits started getting consular interviews in larger numbers. So far, about 150 were approved to come work, but Wells said they're still waiting on another 75.

"Obviously it has become more necessary during the pandemic," she said. "The 150, if we didn't have them, we would be in a precarious situation."

The surge in the omicron variant in the United States has made the strained staffing situation even more apparent in hospitals as health care workers, like so many others, have been sickened by the highly contagious virus and sidelined from work at a time when more patients are coming in.

Nation

AMID STALLED UKRAINE TALKS

Biden orders forces to Europe

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden is ordering 2,000 U.S.-based troops to Poland and Germany and shifting 1,000 more from Germany to Romania, demonstrating to both allies and foes America's commitment to NATO's eastern flank amid fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

Russia fired back with a sharply worded objection, calling the deployments unfounded and "destructive."

Russian President Vladimir Putin also had a new telephone exchange with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. But readouts from both governments showed no progress, with Putin saying the West was giving no ground on Russia's security concerns and Johnson expressing deep concern about Russia's "hostile activity" on the Ukrainian border, referring to Putin's buildup of 100,000 troops there.

The Biden administration is aiming to demonstrate U.S. resolve without undermining efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Biden notably has not sent military reinforcements to the three Baltic countries on NATO's eastern flank—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—that are former states of the Soviet Union.

No U.S. troops are being sent to Ukraine, and White House press secretary Jen Psaki on Wednesday said the administration has stopped calling a Russian invasion "imminent," because that word implies Washington knows Putin has made a decision to invade. Officials say Putin's intentions remain unclear.

Biden

However, increasing U.S. troop levels in Eastern Europe is exactly what Putin has said he finds intolerable, along with the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO. The U.S. already has several thousand troops in Poland, and Romania is host to a NATO missile defense system that Russia considers a threat. The U.S. presence in the region has increased since 2014 when Russia made its first invasion of Ukraine.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said the soon-to-deploy U.S. forces are intended to temporarily bolster U.S. and allied defensive positions.

"These are not permanent moves," he said, stressing that the purpose is to reassure allies. Kirby said Russia had continued its buildup, even in the previous 24 hours, despite U.S. urgings that it deescalate.

In Moscow, a senior official said the U.S. movements will complicate the crisis.

"The unfounded destructive steps will only fuel military tensions and narrow the field for political decisions," Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said in remarks carried by the Interfax news agency.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba again played down fears of a Russian attack in a call with reporters but said that if Russia makes moves that could signal an imminent invasion Ukraine would react as necessary.

Of the 2,000 U.S. troops newly deploying from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, about 1,700 are members of the 82nd Airborne Division infantry brigade, who will go to Poland. The other 300 are with the 18th Airborne Corps and will go to Germany as what the Pentagon called a "joint task force-capable headquarters."

Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak wrote on Twitter that the deployment to his country is "a strong signal of solidarity in response to the situation in Ukraine."

ACROSS THE NATION

Winter storm packing snow, freezing rain moves across US

CHICAGO (AP)—A major winter storm with millions of Americans in its path brought a mix of rain, freezing rain and snow to the central U.S. on Wednesday as airlines canceled thousands of flights, officials urged residents to stay off roads and schools closed campuses. The blast of frigid weather, which began arriving Tuesday night, put a long stretch of states from New Mexico and Colorado to Maine under winter storm warnings and watches. On Wednesday morning, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan saw freezing rain, sleet and snow. By midday Wednesday, some places had already reported snow totals exceeding or nearing a foot, including the central Illinois town of Lewistown with 14.4 inches (36.6 centimeters) and the northeastern Missouri city of Hannibal with 11.5 inches (29.2 centimeters).

Army to immediately start discharging vaccine refusers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Army said Wednesday it will immediately begin discharging soldiers who have refused to get the mandatory COVID-19 vaccine, putting more than 3,300 service members at risk of being thrown out soon. The Army's announcement makes it the final military service to lay out its discharge policy for vaccine refusers. The Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy have already discharged active-duty troops or entry-level personnel at boot camps for refusing the shots. So far, the Army has not discharged any. According to data released by the Army last week, more than 3,300 soldiers have refused to get the vaccine. The Army has said that more than 3,000 soldiers have been issued official written reprimands, which suggests they are already identified in the disciplinary process, and some of them could be among the first to be discharged.

At least 5 shot in Northern California attack at gas station

OROVILLE, Calif. (AP)—At least five people were shot Wednesday night at a gas station and a Walmart store in Northern California before a suspect was arrested, Oroville Mayor Chuck Reynolds said. An active shooter and five victims were reported at an ampm gas station before the attacker was seen at about 8 p.m. at a Walmart where "more victims have been recorded," Mayor Chuck Reynolds said in a series of Facebook posts. The Walmart is about a half-mile from the gas station. A short time later, Reynolds reported that the suspect was in custody. There was no immediate word on the conditions of the victims or a motive for the attack.

Asia

In freezing Afghanistan, aid workers rush to save millions

PUL-E-ALAM, Afghanistan (AP)—A flickering flame of paper, rags and random twigs is the only heat Gulnaz has to keep her 18-month-old son warm, barely visible beneath his icy blanket as she begs on a bitterly cold highway on the road to Kabul.

Gulnaz, left, keep her 18-month-old son warm themselves as they wait for alms in the Kabul - Pul-e-Alam highway eastern Afghanistan, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. AP

The 70-kilometer (45-mile) stretch of highway is flanked by snow-swept hills. Occasionally a driver slows his car and shoves an Afghani note into the 28-year-old woman's bare, dirt-caked hand. She sits for hours on the highway median, positioned just beyond a bump in the road that slows traffic.

Her 16-year-old sister, Khalida, sits nearby. Both are hidden behind encompassing blue burqas. By the end of the day, Gulnaz, who gave just the one name, says they might make 300 Afghanis ($2.85). But most days it is less.

The Taliban's sweep to power in Afghanistan in August drove billions of dollars in international assistance out of the country and sent an already dirt-poor nation, ravaged by war, drought and floods, spiraling toward a humanitarian catastrophe.

But in recent weeks it is the bitter winter cold that is devastating the most vulnerable and has international aid organizations scrambling to save millions from starving or freezing because they have neither food nor fuel. For the poorest the only heat or means of cooking is with the coal or wood they can scrounge from the snowy streets or that they receive from aid groups.

Official who voted to bar Marcos Jr. election bid retires

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine elections official, who voted to disqualify the son and namesake of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in upcoming presidential elections, has alleged that a fellow official plotted to invalidate her vote by delaying the release of the final ruling until after her retirement Wednesday. Some fear the crucial case could spark unrest if it's not resolved soon.

Commissioner Rowena Guanzon disclosed last week that she voted to disqualify Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. from the race due to a 1997 tax conviction she said was an offense that involved "moral turpitude," one of the grounds under the law barring a candidate from seeking public office.

Guanzon said fellow commissioner Aimee Ferolino, who is drafting a ruling on the petitions against Marcos Jr., has delayed its release until after her retirement so her vote would no longer count. She alleged that a powerful politician influenced Ferolino's move, although she did not provide details and evidence.

"They succeeded in stopping my vote," Guanzon told foreign correspondents in an online news conference Tuesday.

She added the issue would likely be taken eventually to the Supreme Court.

Ferolino denied the allegations and said Guanzon's criticisms were undermining the Commission on Elections' credibility.

The 64-year-old Marcos Jr. has already served as provincial governor, congressman and senator. He has topped opinion polls ahead of the May 9 vote, alarming human rights and pro-democracy activists, who've led pockets of street protests following Guanzon's claims.

The elder Marcos was ousted in an army-backed "people power" uprising that became a harbinger of change in authoritarian regimes worldwide. He died in exile in Hawaii three years later without admitting any wrongdoing, including accusations that Marcos, his family and cronies amassed an estimated $5 to $10 billion while he was in power.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2022-009	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 per annum	Feb. 3, 2022	Feb. 18, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

World

'TAKE BACK LIFE'

More nations are easing coronavirus restrictions

AP

Customers at the fish market in Torvehallerne in Copenhagen, Denmark, Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022. Starting Tuesday, it is no longer mandatory to wear protection mask anywhere in public in Denmark.

By JAMEY KEATEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Late-night partying at clubs. Elbow-to-elbow seating in movie theaters. Going without masks in public, especially in Europe and North America: Step by step, many countries are easing their COVID-19 restrictions amid hopes the omicron wave may have passed its peak.

The early moves to relax precautions, based on declining or flattening case counts in recent days, represent what could be another turning point in a nearly two-year pandemic that has been full of them.

The extraordinarily contagious omicron has fueled more cases worldwide over the past 10 weeks—90 million—than were seen during all of 2020, the outbreak's first full year.

But the World Health Organization this week said some countries can now consider carefully relaxing the rules if they have high immunity rates, their health care systems are strong and the epidemiological trends are going in the right direction.

New cases worldwide for the week of Jan. 24-30 were similar to the level of the previous week, though the number of new deaths increased 9% to more than 59,000, reflecting the usual lag between infection and death, according to the U.N. health agency.

The most pronounced pullbacks in restrictions are in Europe, for many months the world's epicenter of the pandemic, as well as in South Africa—where omicron was first announced publicly—and the United States. In Britain and the U.S., as in South Africa before them, COVID-19 cases skyrocketed at first but are now coming down rapidly.

In the U.S., local leaders have served up a hodgepodge of responses. The city of Denver is ending requirements for proof of vaccination and mask rules for businesses and public spaces, while keeping them for schools and public transportation.

New York's governor plans in the next week to review whether to keep the state's mask mandate at a time when cases and hospitalizations have plummeted in the early omicron hotspot. New York City is averaging 4,200 cases a day, compared with 41,000 during the first week of January.

The U.S. as a whole is on a similar trajectory, with infections plunging from an average of over 800,000 a day 2 1/2 weeks ago to 430,000 this week.

England, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and several Nordic countries have taken steps to end or loosen their restrictions. In some places, like Norway and Denmark, the easing comes even though case counts are still hovering near their highs. Some governments are essentially betting that the pandemic is ebbing.

"Rest assured that the worst days are behind us," said Health Minister Fahrettin Koca of Turkey, where the number of daily infections topped 100,000 on Tuesday, the highest on record in the country of over 80 million.

Last week, England ended almost all domestic restrictions. Masks aren't required in public, vaccine passes are no longer needed to get into public venues, and the work-from-home order has been lifted. One lingering condition: Those who test positive still have to isolate.

On Tuesday, Norway lifted its ban on serving alcohol after 11 p.m. and the cap on private gatherings of no more than 10 people. People can sit elbow-to-elbow again at events with fixed seating, and sports events can take place as they did before the pandemic.

"Now it's time for us to take back our everyday life," Norwegian Health Minister Ingvild Kjerkol said Tuesday. "Tonight, we scrap most measures so we can be closer to living a normal life."

In the capital of Denmark, which on Tuesday took the lead among European Union members by scrapping most restrictions, many people were still wearing masks on the streets and in stores a day later.

"I still wear a mask because I want to protect myself and others whose health is not so good, or who have health issues," said retiree Kjeld Rasmussen, 86, in Copenhagen. "I have several things (health conditions) and so for me, it is also a good way to say to others, 'Keep your distance.'"

Off The Wall

Gov tells Bette Midler to kiss dog's 'heinie'—and shows it

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)—Gov. Jim Justice has a message for singer and actress Bette Midler, who called West Virginians "poor, illiterate and strung out" in a tweet after Sen. Joe Manchin refused to support President Joe Biden's Build Back Better Act.

The 70-year-old Republican governor ended his televised State of the State address Thursday night by lifting up his English bulldog and flashing its rear end to the cameras and crowd.

"Babydog tells Bette Midler and all those out there: Kiss her heinie," Justice said, grinning as people applauded and some gave him a standing ovation.

Justice had spent more than an hour touting the state's accomplishments, including two recently announced economic development projects.

"Absolutely too many people doubted us," he said. "They never believed in West Virginia. ... They told every bad joke in the world about us."

(CHRIS DORST/CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL VIA AP)

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice holds up his dog Babydog's rear end as a message to people who've doubted the state as he comes to the end of his State of the State speech in the House chambers, Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022, in Charleston, W.Va.

The crowd in the House of Delegates gallery included lawmakers, state Supreme Court justices, agency heads and members of the high school girl's basketball team Justice coaches, who were sitting in the gallery.

Midler shot back in a tweet with a ranking of states from an unnamed source showing West Virginia near the bottom in health care, education and the economy. Said Midler, the dog's heinie would make a better governor, though she used a stronger word than that.

Not everyone was amused by Justice. In a tweet, West Virginia Democratic Del. Shawn Fluharty called the governor's move "embarrassing and beneath the office."

"The @WVGovernor brought his Babydog and pony show to the State of the State and pulled this stunt as some bold statement. It was nothing short of embarrassing and beneath the office," he said. "Jim Justice habitually lowers the bar of our state. They don't laugh with us, but at us."

Manchin, a Democrat, effectively tanked his party's signature $2 trillion domestic policy initiative that would have poured billions of dollars into child care, health care and other services.

Embarrassed burglar leaves $200, flees home with AR-15

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—The owners of a New Mexico home were doubly surprised over the weekend to find a burglar in their house with an AR-15, and then to have him apologize, give them money and leave embarrassed.

The man had slept, bathed, dined and had some beer at the home on the outskirts of Santa Fe before the owners returned and discovered him, according to a Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office police report cited by the Albuquerque Journal.

He had an AR-15 scoped rifle but didn't threaten them, or take any of their jewelry or other belongings.

Instead, he gave the homeowners $200 as "reimbursement for the window he broke," the report said.

The suspect—about 6 feet (1.8 meters) tall and in his late 20s—also shared a bit of his story, telling the owners he was running from someone and that his family had been killed in east Texas, according to the report. He said his car had broken down outside Santa Fe.

The homeowners told authorities the man was "extremely embarrassed and apologetic about the situation," the report states.

The suspect left the home with his duffel bag and gun, walking down a ditch. His alleged larcenies totaled $15, the report said.

Sheriff's deputies came to the home and searched the ditch but didn't find anyone.

Wandering hen taken into custody at Pentagon security area

(ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON VIA AP)

In this photo provided by the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, is a wandering chicken that was caught sneaking around a security area at the Pentagon, a local animal welfare organization said.

WASHINGTON (AP)—A wandering chicken was caught sneaking around a security area at the Pentagon, a local animal welfare organization said.

The loose hen was found early Monday morning near the U.S. Department of Defense headquarters, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, Virginia, wrote on social media.

"Apparently, the answer to 'why did the chicken cross the road' is to get to the Pentagon," the group posted.

The chicken was taken into custody by one of the league's employees.

Chelsea Jones, a spokesperson for the organization, said in an email that she couldn't reveal the precise location where the bird was spotted.

"We are not allowed to disclose exactly where she was found," Jones said. "We can only say it was at a security checkpoint."

It's also unclear where the chicken came from or how she got to the Pentagon.

The hen—which has brown feathers and a red comb and wattles—is a Rhode Island Red. Jones described the bird as "sweet" and "nervous" but said she has allowed some people to pet her.

She's now known as Henny Penny, one of the names given to the chicken that thinks "the sky is falling" in a folk tale.

This one has gained notoriety of her own: Jimmy Fallon performed a song about her on "The Tonight Show."

Corrections officer impersonator arrested at Miami school

MIAMI (AP)—An 18-year-old is accused of impersonating a corrections officer while talking to staff members at a Miami high school.

Miami-Dade school police noticed the young man inside Miami Palmetto Senior High School around 1 p.m. Thursday.

He was wearing a Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department jacket and traffic vest, and had a Florida corrections badge with a photo that police said did not look like him, the report said,

The young man told officers that he'd just been hired by the corrections department and that he would be attending the academy soon, WPLG reported.

Police said he had a handcuff case attached to his belt, along with a pouch on his hip in the shape of a firearm.

Officers detained him and patted him down. They found a pair of handcuffs, a thermometer shaped like a firearm, a pocket knife and two credit cards that did not belong to him.

He was arrested for impersonating an officer, trespassing on school property with a firearm, unlawfully possessing a stolen credit or debit card, burglary, and unlawful use of a police badge.

He complained of heart pain and difficulty breathing and was taken to a hospital to be checked out before being booked into jail.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Emily Valles Vargas

March 29, 1960 - January 13, 2022

To everyone who supported us following the death of Emily, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for all your kindness, support, messages of sympathy, comfort and monetary donations during our bereavement. Your acts of love and kindness continue to be a great comfort to us in our time of sorrow. We would also like to thank TanHoldings, the Marianas Christian Church family for arranging the service, the NMTECH team who extended their helping hands during our tribulation and to our many friends and relatives.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

The Vargas Family

Science & Thecnology

Doctors: Cancer patients cured a decade after gene therapy

AP

This 2021 photo provided by the family shows Doug Olson of Pleasanton, Calif., in Bend, Ore.

By LAURA UNGAR
AP SCIENCE WRITER

In 2010, doctors treated Doug Olson's leukemia with an experimental gene therapy that transformed some of his blood cells into cancer killers. More than a decade later, there's no sign of cancer in his body.

The treatment cured Olson and a second patient, according to the University of Pennsylvania doctors, who said it was the first time the therapy had been studied for so long.

"I'm doing great right now. I'm still very active. I was running half marathons until 2018," said Olson, 75, who lives in Pleasanton, California. "This is a cure. And they don't use the word lightly."

His doctors describe the two cases in a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature. They say the two examples show the treatment, called CAR-T cell therapy, can attack cancer immediately, then stay inside the body for years and evolve there to keep the disease at bay. Such so-called "living drugs" are now used by thousands around the world to treat certain blood cancers.

Based on the 10-year results, "we can now conclude that CAR-T cells can actually cure patients of leukemia," said Dr. Carl June, one of the authors of the study.

The one-time treatment involves collecting the patient's own T cells, white blood cells key to the immune system, and genetically changing them in the lab so that they will find and attack cancer cells. The modified cells are given back to the patient through IV.

By the time Olson got the treatment, he'd been fighting cancer for years. When doctors diagnosed him with chronic lymphocytic leukemia in 1996, he said, "I thought I had months to live."

He eventually underwent chemotherapy and, at one point, his physician, Dr. David Porter, suggested he may need a bone marrow transplant. Porter also raised the idea of joining a CAR-T therapy study. Olson, CEO of a New Hampshire lab products company, said he was excited by the science and eager to avoid the transplant.

A couple weeks after getting the treatment, he felt sick for about a week and was hospitalized for three days.

"It was the very next week he sat me down and he said, 'We cannot find a single cancer cell in your body," Olson recalled.

The other patient, retired corrections officer Bill Ludwig, had similar results.

Over time, researchers said, the modified cells evolved, many turning into "helper" cells that work with the cancer-killing cells. Helper cells eventually became dominant in both patients.

Study author J. Joseph Melenhorst said they were able to isolate and analyze the cells using new technologies, which gave them "very good insight" into how they persisted in the patients' bodies.

Dr. Armin Ghobadi of Washington University in St. Louis, an expert in gene and cellular immunotherapy for cancer, called the findings "incredible." Though the word "cure" is rarely used in cancer, he said it appears these patients were "most likely" cured.

He was intrigued by the persistence of the CAR-T cells and the way the living drug evolves.

Toyota heading to moon with cruiser, robotic arms, dreams

TOKYO (AP)—Toyota is working with Japan's space agency on a vehicle to explore the lunar surface, with ambitions to help people live on the moon by 2040 and then go live on Mars, company officials said Friday.

The vehicle being developed with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency is called Lunar Cruiser, whose name pays homage to the Toyota Land Cruiser sport utility vehicle. Its launch is set for the late 2020's.

The vehicle is based on the idea that people eat, work, sleep and communicate with others safely in cars, and the same can be done in outer space, said Takao Sato, who heads the Lunar Cruiser project at Toyota Motor Corp.

"We see space as an area for our once-in-a-century transformation. By going to space, we may be able to develop telecommunications and other technology that will prove valuable to human life," Sato told The Associated Press.

Gitai Japan Inc., a venture contracted with Toyota, has developed a robotic arm for the Lunar Cruiser, designed to perform tasks such as inspection and maintenance. Its "grapple fixture" allows the arm's end to be changed so it can work like different tools, scooping, lifting and sweeping.

Gitai Chief Executive Sho Nakanose said he felt the challenge of blasting off into space has basically been met but working in space entails big costs and hazards for astronauts. That's where robots would come in handy, he said.

Since its founding in the 1930s, Toyota has fretted about losing a core business because of changing times. It has ventured into housing, boats, jets and robots. Its net-connected sustainable living quarters near Mount Fuji, called Woven City, where construction is starting this year.

(TOYOTA MOTOR CORP. VIA AP)

This graphic illustration provided by Toyota Motor Corp. shows a vehicle called "Lunar Cruiser" to explore the lunar surface. Toyota is working with Japan's space agency on the Lunar Cruiser to explore the lunar surface, with ambitions to help people live on the moon by 2040 and then go live on Mars, company officials said Friday, Jan. 28, 2022.

If PC files store slowly, it may be a signal of larger problem

Q: My four-year-old Windows 10 laptop has a weird problem when saving Microsoft Word files. In the last couple of months, the time it takes Word to save a file has gone from nearly instantaneous to taking 10 to 15 seconds. This doesn't happen the first time I save a new file, just on subsequent "saves." These are simple, text-only files. What's wrong?

A: I think your hard disk is congested. Either the drive's contents are fragmented (segments of files are spread around the disk) or the drive is nearly full. As a result, there is less available storage space, and it takes the PC longer to find a spot on the disk to save the file.

Why is there a difference between how the PC stores a Word file initially and how it stores the file after that? To understand, you need to know a bit about how disk drives work.

When a hard drive stores a file, it doesn't erase the previous version. Instead, it searches for unused disk space where it can store the updated file. This accumulation of new and previous file versions is one reason that your hard drive fills up over time. (The hard drive will eventually overwrite old, outdated files, but not until it runs out of unused disk space.)

As your hard disk fills up, there are consequences. First, the drive may become fragmented. That means that the disk is so crowded that the only unused storage space is scattered at different locations around the disk. As a result, the PC often has to break up files and store pieces of them at different disk locations, causing your PC to store files more slowly. As the drive gets closer to being full, it takes even longer to store a file.

What's the significance of all this? When you initially store a file, the PC doesn't have to do much. It finds some unused areas on the disk and puts the file there.

But the second time you store the file, the PC must go to the "Master File Table," a list of all computer files and their physical locations on the disk, mark the previous version of your file outdated, then search for additional unused disk space to store the latest version of the file. If the disk is congested, the updated file must be divided into chunks and stored at several unused spots on the disk. As a result, your second file "save" takes longer than the first.

The way to fix disk congestion (and shorten "save" times) is to reorganize your hard drive. In the search window on the taskbar, type in "defrag," and in the resulting menu choose "Defragment and optimize drives." Highlight the "C" drive (the hard drive) and below that click "optimize."

During defragmenting, large blocks of data are moved around the disk. The goal is to have entire files stored in one physical disk location instead of multiple locations, so that your PC can store and retrieve files more quickly. The defragmentation process could take a few minutes to a few hours, depending on the hard drive's storage capacity and how fragmented its contents are. You can continue to use the PC while the process is going on.

There's also another benefit of defragmenting: Some unwanted data — previous versions of files or deleted files — will be overwritten when all the disk's data is moved around. That reduces the number of old, unwanted files on the hard disk, creating a bit more unused space. To get rid of more unneeded files, get a disk cleaning program (see tinyurl.com/2p96v7c9).

After defragmenting the hard disk, check to see how full the disk is. In File Explorer, highlight the "C" drive. Then right-click the drive, and in the next menu choose "properties." Compare the disk's "used space" to its "free space. If the C drive is in the range of 80% full, it's time to move some data or programs to an external hard drive.

Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Star Tribune of Minneapolis*. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Life & Style

CNN president resigns after relationship with co-worker

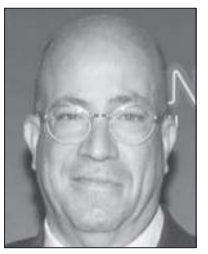
NEW YORK (AP)—CNN President Jeff Zucker abruptly resigned Wednesday after acknowledging a consensual relationship with another network executive—an entanglement that came to light during an investigation of now-fired anchor Chris Cuomo.

Zucker said he was asked about his relationship with longtime aide Allison Gollust as part of the Cuomo investigation, which revealed that the former anchor had aided his brother, then-New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as he navigated a sexual harassment scandal.

"I acknowledged the relationship had evolved in recent years," Zucker wrote in a memo announcing the end of his nine-year tenure. "I was required to disclose it when it began but I didn't. I was wrong."

A memo to employees from Jason Kilar, CEO of CNN parent WarnerMedia, said three senior executives at CNN would run the network on an interim basis.

Zucker, 56, has been an industry leader since he was executive producer of the "Today" show in the 1990s. In the following decade, he ran NBC's entertainment division, where he was instrumental in putting the reality show "The Apprentice" starring Donald Trump on the air.


Zucker

He rose to become chief of NBC Universal and left in 2010 when Comcast took over.

In a statement Zucker said he wished that his tenure at CNN had ended differently but, "it was an amazing run. And I loved every minute."

Gollust, a former publicist who rose to the rank of CNN's executive vice president and chief marketing officer, is staying at the network.

"Jeff and I have been close friends and professional partners for over 20 years," she said in a statement. "Recently, our relationship changed during COVID. I regret that we didn't disclose it at the right time. I'm incredibly proud of my time at CNN and look forward to continuing the great work we do everyday."

Prior to joining CNN, Gollust served as communications director for Andrew Cuomo. Like Zucker, she worked at NBC prior to that. Both are divorced.

Chris Cuomo, at the time CNN's most popular primetime anchor, was fired in December when it was revealed in documents released by New York Attorney General Letitia James that his behind-the-scenes role helping craft his brother's response to harassment charges was more extensive than previously acknowledged.

James' office found that Andrew Cuomo sexually harassed at least 11 women. The former governor resigned in August to avoid a likely impeachment trial.

Chris Cuomo is reportedly seeking a settlement from CNN, and speculation that Zucker and Gollust's relationship might come up in those talks was raised when Radaronline.com wrote a story about the two last month.

Cuomo's lawyer, Bryan Freedman, did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The resignation was met with shock within CNN, where Zucker was generally well liked. He sharpened the network's focus and, as a former producer, was often seen in the control rooms giving hands-on advice about running shows.

Like other news outlets, CNN has suffered in the the ratings following the end of the 2020 election, and has not yet named a replacement for Cuomo.

4 charged after overdose death of actor Michael K. Williams

NEW YORK (AP)—Four men face charges that they were members of the drug distribution crew that supplied a deadly mix of narcotics to Michael K. Williams, the renowned actor from "The Wire" who overdosed just hours after buying fentanyl-laced heroin in a deal recorded on security camera video.

The man seen on camera handing Williams the drugs on a Brooklyn sidewalk, Irvin Cartagena, was charged with directly causing the actor's death, authorities said.

Williams' death was investigated by the New York City police department, but the charges were brought by federal prosecutors in Manhattan, who revealed that the suspects had been under surveillance even before the actor's fatal overdose last September.

It was a sting that bore a striking resemblance to the kind depicted on "The Wire," where Williams gained fame playing the bandit Omar Little.

For months, a paid informant working for the NYPD had been making controlled buys of heroin on the same block where Williams purchased his drugs. An undercover police officer made one buy just days before the actor copped his fatal dose, court papers said.

The vials of drugs found with Williams when his body was discovered on Sept. 6 bore the same label, "AAA Insurance," as the vials purchased by the officer.

The day after the actor's death, the NYPD's informant went back to buy more drugs from the same group, recording a conversation in which some members of the crew talked about Williams' overdose. One denied selling any drugs containing fentanyl.

Cartagena and the three other men in the case were arrested Tuesday. Three made initial appearances Wednesday in Manhattan federal court. Cartagena's initial court appearance is scheduled for Thursday in Puerto Rico, where he was arrested.

Dolly Parton, Eminem, Lionel Richie among Rock Hall nominees

NEW YORK (AP)—Dolly Parton, Eminem, Lionel Richie, Duran Duran and A Tribe Called Quest are among this year's first-time nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

The Cleveland-based institution announced 17 artists and groups being considered for Rock Hall induction, including Rage Against the Machine, Pat Benatar, Dionne Warwick, Carly Simon, Judas Priest and Beck.

Beck and Simon are also nominated for the first time. Eminem, who is playing the Super Bowl Halftime Show with Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige and Kendrick Lamar, earned a nomination in the first year he was eligible.

This year's class will be announced in May, with an induction ceremony planned for later this year.

"This year's ballot recognizes a diverse group of incredible artists, each who has had a profound impact on the sound of youth culture," said John Sykes, head of the foundation that runs the Rock Hall, in a press release on Wednesday.

Artists must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years before they're eligible for induction.

Duran Duran singer Simon Le Bon thanked fans on Twitter for their support over the years. "This distinction is due in large part to the fact that we have an army of fans around the world who have unwaveringly supported us for the past four decades," he wrote.

'The View' presses on with a simple 'OK' on Whoopi Goldberg

NEW YORK (AP)—With Tara Setmayer, a former GOP communications director on Capitol Hill, sitting in Wednesday as guest co-host for a second day this week, Whoopi Goldberg's colleagues on "The View" had virtually nothing to say about her two-week suspension for her comments on Jews and the Holocaust.

At the top of the ABC talk show, co-host Joy Behar noted Goldberg's absence and said simply, with a tiny head tilt, "OK," before moving on to other topics. The show went on with four co-hosts.

Goldberg's suspension was announced by ABC News president Kim Godwin on Tuesday, the day after Goldberg said during a discussion of a Tennessee school board's banning of the book "Maus" that the Holocaust was "not about race ... it's about man's inhumanity to other man."

She apologized hours later and again on air Tuesday, but not before her words rallied critics and defenders alike.

"While Whoopi has apologized, I've asked her to take time to reflect and learn about the impact of her comments. The entire ABC News organization stands in solidarity with our Jewish colleagues, friends, family and communities," Godwin said in a statement.

Goldberg's remarks saying race was not a factor in the Holocaust drew condemnation from several prominent Jewish leaders.

"My words upset so many people, which was never my intention," Goldberg said Tuesday morning. "I understand why now and for that I am deeply, deeply grateful because the information I got was really helpful and helped me understand some different things."

Man wonders how to mention wife as he begins dating

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married for 40 years. Fifteen years ago, she was diagnosed with cancer and given 18 months to live. Well, she is still around. Because of the illness and experimental medications, she was bedridden, and her dementia grew steadily worse. Left with no other options because of problems with insurance, I placed her into a nursing facility six years ago.

I am still at an age at which I have, I hope, many active years ahead of me. I visit her often, but I have a need for companionship that she obviously can no longer fulfill. I'm friends with a few women (usually friends of friends), and from time to time have the urge to become closer. I go out to dinners, music venues, art shows, etc.

I am torn about whether to live my remaining days in loneliness or pursue the possibilities. Is it wrong to want companionship in my situation? At what point should I explain my situation without scaring off a nice lady friend? Your opinion would be helpful to me as another perspective.

ANONYMOUS, OF COURSE

DEAR ANONYMOUS: What happened to your wife is unfortunate, and you both have my sympathy. Wanting and needing companionship are normal. It is important to ask yourself: If the situation were reversed and YOU were in a nursing home suffering from dementia, to what extent would you want your wife to go on with HER life? Whatever you decide after that, it is crucial you not forget you have a responsibility to make sure she is being well cared for. This means visiting her often to ensure it, because dementia patients do better when they know someone loves them.

As to how to explain to women that you are married, well, the ones who are friends of friends already know that. And those you meet who don't know should be told during the course of your first serious conversation. It's the honorable thing to do.

**

DEAR ABBY: I got married six months ago to an awesome guy. Now we're expecting. Although I don't want the child, I am trying hard to want it. But I keep coming back to overwhelming regret, because it is too soon. I know this means the world to him. Truly, he is amazing, but his light is my doom.

I need time away from him to see how I feel. We are never apart, and it's making me irritable, like I have nothing of my own anymore. HE'S ALWAYS THERE. I suppose it is a good thing, but I can't breathe. What do I do? I feel like an awful wife and person now. What if the baby comes and I turn into some evil mom?

NEUROTIC IN NEVADA

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

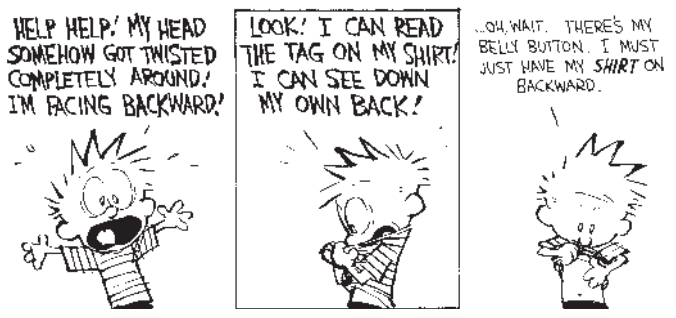
DEAR NEUROTIC: Healthy relationships, marriage included, are all about honest communication. Tell your amazing husband you need time alone to recharge and process your thoughts. Was he this way before you were married, or could it be because you are pregnant and, in his eyes, "vulnerable"?

You are not an awful person for needing alone time, and it won't make you an evil mom, so calm your fears. You may just need respite, which you won't receive until you make it known. Because, I assume, you are seeing your OB-GYN regularly, it is important you discuss the emotions you are experiencing with them. You may be suffering from depression, which some pregnant women do. Your feelings may also be normal, considering your pregnancy was not planned.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

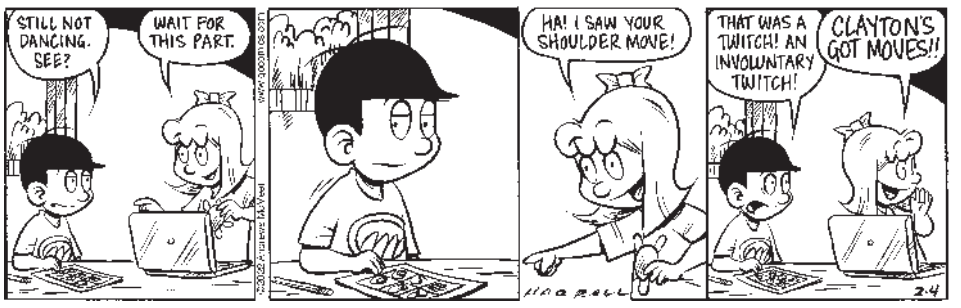

HELP HELP! MY HEAD SOMEHOW GOT TWISTED COMPLETELY AROUND! I'M FACING BACKWARD!
LOOK! I CAN READ THE TAG ON MY SHIRT! I CAN SEE DOWN MY OWN BACK!
...OH, WAIT. THERE'S MY BELLY BUTTON. I MUST JUST HAVE MY SHIRT ON BACKWARD.
NEVER MIND. I'VE GOT MY HEAD ON STRAIGHT AFTER ALL.
OH, I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

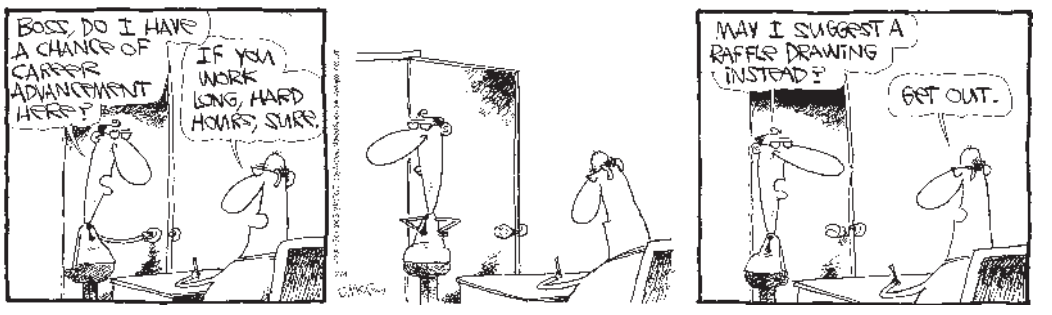
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


STILL NOT DANCING. SEE?
WAIT FOR THIS PART.
HA! I SAW YOUR SHOULDER MOVE!
THAT WAS A TWITCH! AN INVOLUNTARY TWITCH!
CLAYTON'S GOT MOVES!!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


BOSS, DO I HAVE A CHANCE OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT HERE?
IF YOU WORK LONG, HARD HOURS, SURE.
MAY I SUGGEST A RAFFLE DRAWING INSTEAD?
GET OUT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

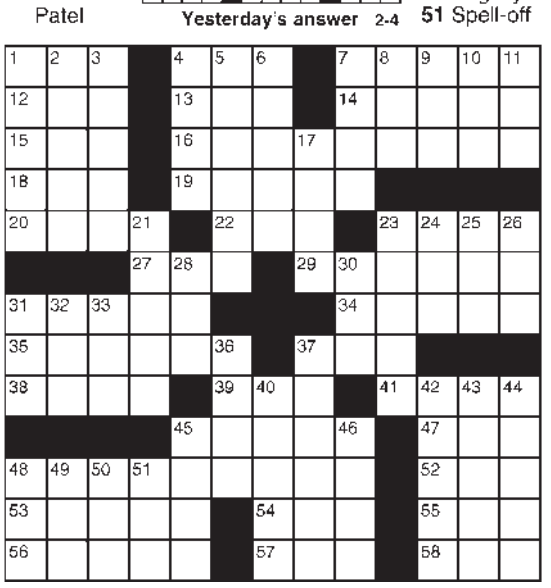
ACROSS
1 Small battery
4 Pitcher's pride
7 Envelope parts
12 Slowing, in music (Abbr.)
13 King, in Cannes
14 Western flick
15 San Francisco's — Hill
16 Ornamental shrub
18 Pie — mode
19 Type of trap-shooting
20 Tubular pasta
22 Oahu or Maui (Abbr.)
23 Pitt of "Troy"
27 "See ya!"
29 Search for food
31 Aplomb
34 Port of Nigeria
35 Woodland
37 "Lion" actor Patel
38 Jackie of "Rush Hour"
39 Hitter's stat
41 Reed instrument
45 Unites
47 TV's Longoria
48 Taboo
52 Tyler of "Jersey Girl"
53 Disney mermaid
54 Epoch
55 Inseparable
56 Thesaurus compiler
57 Eggy quaff
58 Director Craven

DOWN
1 Sitcom pioneer Desi
2 Garlicky mayo
3 Facing the pitcher
4 Barks
5 League newbie
6 Bogs down
7 Indy winner A.J.
8 Back muscle, briefly
9 Sports fig.
10 Architect I.M.
11 Mexican Mrs.
17 Narcissist's love
21 "Peer Gynt" playwright
23 "Well done!"
24 Joplin tune
25 Past
26 — Moines
28 Thumbs-up
30 World Cup cheer
31 USMC rank
32 La-la lead-in
33 Savings plan acronym
36 Walked (on)
37 Moolah
40 46th president
42 Underneath
43 Like lambs
44 Roof overhangs
45 Leave at the altar
46 Hitch
48 Distant
49 Granada gold
50 Fix illegally
51 Spell-off

Solution time: 25 mins.

G	A	L		D	A	D	S		S	O	L	E
I	D	O		E	M	I	T		C	R	E	E
L	O	N	E	S	O	M	E		R	E	E	L
		E	L		S	E	N	I	O	R	S	
R	E	W	O	R	D		L	A	P			
I	T	O		E	A	T		S	T	A	T	E
T	A	L	C		M	C	C		S	L	O	W
A	L	F	I	E		P	A	C		L	I	E
			T	R	E		P	E	T	A	L	S
R	A	D	I	A	L	S		L	I	L		
E	L	I	Z		S	T	A	L	L	O	N	E
S	O	R	E		I	A	G	O		N	O	V
T	E	E	N		E	C	O	S		E	T	E

Yesterday's answer 2-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Oscar De La Hoya, 49; Gabrielle Anwar, 52; Clint Black, 60; Alice Cooper, 74.

Happy Birthday: Make things happen. Put together a playlist that will take you from start to finish, and don't stop until you reach your desired destination. The progress you make this year will map out what's to come and encourage you to update your skills, qualifications and goals to ensure you reap the rewards. Your progress depends on your tenacity. Your numbers are 8, 15, 22, 28, 32, 38, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stay calm, keep busy and channel your energy wisely. Too much time will lead to restless behavior and poor decisions. Don't risk your reputation or position. Concentrate on getting things done on time and working alongside people who enhance your skills. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Say and do what's on your mind. You'll pay the price if you pussyfoot around or keep secrets that might hurt the status quo. Be ready to follow through and make things happen. A physical change will lead to compliments. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Put in a good word for someone you want to help, but don't undersell yourself. It's essential to give a fair analysis regarding what you want and are willing to do. Live up to your promises, and you'll reach your expectations. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* You'll feel the pressure if you let your emotions interfere with common sense. Handle relationships with diplomacy, and give others a chance to do as they please. It's better to observe than dictate if you want to know where you stand. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Keep an open mind, and you'll receive valuable information and insight into trends and how others think. Knowledge is power and can help you gain support or attract a partnership that will improve your chance to advance. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't jump into a joint venture without proper research. If you make an emotional decision, regret will follow. Use your resources wisely. Take a timeout to go over important details that can make or break your ability to gain ground. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Listen carefully, evaluate what's said and consider the consequence of a poor decision. Focus on stability and security, not flippant decisions that might put you at risk financially, medically or legally. Protect your assets and lower your overhead. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Turn your dream into a reality. Swoop in and take advantage of an opportunity to display your insight and resourceful nature while networking or socializing with mainstream or well-connected people. Turn on the charm, and romance will follow. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep your life simple, relationships honest and goals reasonable. Don't assume anything or expect others to be reliable. Verify information, and be ready to put in long hours to reach your destination. Someone unpredictable will mislead you. ✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* High energy, coupled with willpower and intelligence, will override any negative influence that gets in your way. A chance to try something different will open your eyes to trends and diverse ways to use your skills. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Play to win. Be alert, observe what others are doing and make yourself a promise to finish what you start. Don't let what others do interfere with your plans. Stay on track, regardless of temptation or meddling. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't scramble. Use your imagination, and you will come up with a plan that serves you well and makes a difference to others. Sign up for a leadership position and show off your skills and attributes. A door will open. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are meticulous, reserved and underestimated. You are novel and persistent.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8			6					9
	2					7	1	
	9	3		2		5		
								4
2			8	7	1	6		
		5		6		8	2	
	1	2					5	
7					9			1

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	5	2	8	6	1	9	3	7
8	9	3	2	4	7	5	6	1
6	1	7	9	3	5	4	2	8
5	4	9	6	7	3	8	1	2
7	3	1	5	8	2	6	4	9
2	8	6	1	9	4	7	5	3
1	6	8	3	5	9	2	7	4
9	2	4	7	1	6	3	8	5
3	7	5	4	2	8	1	9	6

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'MANK' (FILM) Solution: 11 letters

A	M	A	R	D	T	C	S	E	I	V	A	D	O	I
T	T	A	L	A	N	I	G	I	R	O	G	R	H	P
C	C	I	N	O	A	A	R	L	I	S	S	A	E	L
E	A	A	I	K	R	M	H	O	Z	O	S	W	R	A
R	C	R	R	M	I	E	A	U	N	G	E	O	M	Y
E	A	J	O	T	A	E	F	I	L	U	R	H	A	L
M	D	T	O	R	N	Y	W	S	L	I	P	E	N	I
O	E	H	S	S	A	O	E	I	N	L	R	E	E	L
N	M	T	I	D	E	R	C	R	C	T	I	L	K	S
Y	Y	L	N	S	A	P	A	U	L	Z	T	W	D	T
T	S	A	E	D	T	N	H	O	J	S	F	R	Ⓟ	U
R	M	E	V	K	I	O	A	R	A	S	A	I	Ⓛ	D
A	E	W	O	A	R	V	R	C	N	W	R	T	Ⓞ	I
P	A	M	L	I	F	U	A	Y	A	C	D	E	Ⓣ	O
I	R	V	I	N	G	E	B	D	S	C	R	E	E	N

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Academy, Amanda, Arliss, Awards, Burke, Castle, Ceremony, Contract, Credit, David, Davies, Dratt, Drama, Film, Gary, Guilt, Hearst, Herman, Howard, Irving, John, Joseph, Life, Lily, Louis, Love, Mankiewicz, Marion, Mayer, Original, Orson, Party, Paul, Play, Plot, Press, Rant, Reel, Rita, Sara, Screen, Script, Smear, Story, Studio, Tom, Wealth, William, Write

Yesterday's Answer: Zoom

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Kuzma, Dinwiddie lead Wizards to stunner past 76ers, 106-103

AP

Washington Wizards' Spencer Dinwiddie, left, drives to the basket against Philadelphia 76ers' Matisse Thybulle, right, during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, in Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Montrezl Harrell blew kisses to the Philly crowd on a bucket that kept Washington's upset rolling.

Spencer Dinwiddie and Kyle Kuzma did their part to help the Wizards kiss their losing streak goodbye.

Dinwiddie scored the go-ahead bucket with 90 seconds left in the game and had his first career triple-double to lead the Washington Wizards to a 106-103 win over the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday night.

Dinwiddie had 14 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists. Kuzma scored 24 points and the Wizards snapped a six-game losing streak.

"The points just came because I shot a lot," Dinwiddie said. "I didn't shoot well."

Kuzma joked Dinwiddie — who was just 4 of 16 — had a quadruple-double thanks to "missed shots."

"The No. 1 way to get out of a funk is just ball out," Kuzma said.

Harrell, who scored 14 points, hit a 16-footer for 102-98 lead and blew kisses with his outstretched right arm and one with his left to a stunned Philly crowd headed into a timeout. The Wizards won with Bradley Beal sidelined at least a week with an injured left wrist.

"With the absence of Brad, that's a big chunk of our offense," coach Wes Unseld Jr. said. "But no one is going to step in and fill that void. Collectively, everyone's got to pick it up in certain areas and tonight was a great example of that."

Beal paid attention to the outcome, tweeting, " W!!! "

Joel Embiid had 27 points and 14 rebounds for the Sixers but missed a couple of gimmes and had a tying shot late blocked by Kuzma that could have changed the game.

"We just made the right plays down the stretch and throughout the whole game," Kuzma said.

Danny Green hit a 3 for the Sixers with 1.6 seconds left that pulled them to 104-103. The Wizards sealed it from the line.

Tyrese Maxey scored 22 points for the Sixers.

"I just thought we never got our offensive rhythm the entire night," coach Doc Rivers said.

The Sixers pulled off perhaps their most improbable win of the season on Monday when they played without Embiid and gutted out an overtime win against Memphis. With Beal out, the scuffling Wizards—9½-point underdogs, according to FanDuel Sportsbook—gamely pulled off perhaps their most unlikely win of the season.

Kuzma played like Washington's version of Embiid for the night and hit four 3s on 10 of 19 shooting overall. He left a 30-footer fly to close the third, and when it brushed through the net, the Wizards grabbed an 81-79 lead.

Embiid was named the Eastern Conference player of the month for a January where he averaged 34 points, 10.8 rebounds and took the Sixers to the brink of first place. Embiid, though, was flat in the first quarter, and missed 4 of 5 shots at the same time Washington made 10 of 17.

The early hole helped end the Sixers' five-game winning streak.

"It took us a long time to get going," Maxey said. "We had a slow start and it was hard for us to recover."

Nothing, though, could rattled the Wizards. They were coming of a tough 112-98 loss a night earlier at Milwaukee and showed toughness down the stretch given the back-to-back schedule and Beal's absence.

"This is the NBA We won the other night without Joel and people don't get that," Rivers said. "People are like how could you lose or win those games? Because other guys on the team want to win, too. And they're good."

Lakers 99, Trail Blazers 94

In Los Angeles, Anthony Davis scored 30 points, Carmelo Anthony added 24 and Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Portland.

Davis had 19 points and seven of his 15 rebounds in the final 12 minutes as the Lakers returned home with a win after going 2-4 on their Eastern road trip.

Norman Powell led the Trail Blazers with 30 points and tied a season high with five 3-pointers. Anfernee Simons added 19 points, and Jusuf Nurkic had a double-double with 16 points and 13 rebounds.

Portland has dropped three straight and five of its last six.

Grizzlies 120, Knicks 108

In New York, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 26 points and 10 rebounds, Ja Morant added 23 points and nine assists and Memphis beat New York.

Morant had some of his usual high-flying highlight plays, but shot just 9 for 27 from the field, missing all six 3-point attempts.

But the Grizzlies go well beyond their first-time All-Star. Rookie Ziaire Williams scored a season-high 21 points on 9-for-11 shooting, while Jackson, Desmond Bane and De'Anthony Melton all hit four 3-pointers.

Evan Fournier scored 30 points for the Knicks.

Kings 112, Nets 101

In Sacramento, Calif., Tyrese Haliburton scored seven of his 12 points in the fourth quarter and Sacramento handed Brooklyn its sixth consecutive loss.

Harrison Barnes scored 19 points and Haliburton had 11 assists to help the Kings stop a seven-game skid. Buddy Hield and Davion Mitchell scored 18 apiece.

Nic Claxton had a career-high 23 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Brooklyn. James Harden, who has been nursing a sore right hand and a hamstring injury, was held to four points, his fewest since scoring five against Chicago on May 15, 2021.

The Nets' skid is their longest since a seven-game slide Dec. 26, 2019, to Jan. 7, 2020. Brooklyn, which played at NBA-best Phoenix on Tuesday night, hasn't won since beating the Spurs in San Antonio on Jan. 21.

Jazz 108, Nuggets 104

In Salt Lake City, Trent Forrest had career highs of 18 points and eight assists to lead Utah past Denver Nuggets.

Mike Conley added 17 points, and Rudy Gay, Royce O'Neale, and Bojan Bogdanovic had 15 points apiece.

Utah won for just the third time in 14 games. The Jazz swept the season series 4-0.

Bryn Forbes scored 26 points for Denver. Nikola Jokic sat out because of a toe injury.

Celtics 113, Hornets 107

In Boston, Josh Richardson made six 3-pointers and scored 23 points, Jayson Tatum hit two key free throws and finished with 19 points and Boston held off Charlotte.

Marcus Smart scored 22 points, and Jaylen Brown added 15 to help Boston win its third straight.

LaMelo Ball had a career-best 38 points for Charlotte.

Thunder 120, Mavericks 114, OT

In Dallas, Lu Dort scored 30 points, including 14 straight for Oklahoma City in overtime, and rookie Tre Mann added a career-best 29 in a victory over Dallas.

The Thunder won their second consecutive game for their first winning streak since taking three straight Dec. 18-22.

Luka Doncic scored 40 points for the Mavericks in the opener of a six-game homestand, their longest of the season.

Magic 119, Pacers 118

In Indianapolis, Gary Harris scored 22 points and Wendell Carter Jr. had 19 points and 18 rebounds to help Orlando rally past Indiana.

Harris scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, including two key 3-pointers.

Caris LeVert led the Pacers with 26 points, and rookie Terry Taylor had 24 points and 16 rebounds.

Rockets 115, Cavaliers 104

In Houston, Christian Wood and rookie Jalen Green each scored 21 points and Houston beat Cleveland to snap an 11-game home skid.

Cleveland rookie Evan Mobley had a career-high 29 points and added 12 rebounds.

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$500 towards a brand new one!
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*Trade in value up to $500 will be taken off of the total rent to own price on new sofa or sofa set agreements. See store for details.
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DIAL
Rent-to-Own

Flores says he won't drop lawsuit even if hired as coach

By TERESA M. WALKER
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Brian Flores says his lawsuit against the NFL over alleged racist hiring practices will continue even if he becomes a head coach again this offseason.

Flores has interviewed with the Houston Texans and New Orleans Saints, who have yet to fill their coaching vacancies. If they call, Flores will listen, but he said the suit will go on because the league needs change.

"This is about changing the hiring practices in the National Football League, and that's what this lawsuit is about," Flores said Wednesday on CNN. "I want to coach football that's what I'm called to do."

Flores said he knows others have similar stories and that it is hard to speak out. He called his potential sacrifice bigger than football or coaching. The NFL is at a fork in the road, he said.

"We're going keep it the way it is or go in another direction and make some change where we're actually changing the hearts and minds of those who make decisions to hire head coaches, executives, et cetera," Flores said on CBS. "That's what we've got to get to. We've got to change hearts and minds."

Tony Dungy, a Pro Football Hall of Fame coach, wrote an open letter to NFL owners Wednesday and shared a link on social media.

"One year ago I wrote a letter to NFL owners saying the NFL had a problem only they could solve," Dungy wrote on Twitter. "Not a lot has changed. Brian Flores' suit shows the frustration many black coaches have. It could be just the tip of the iceberg. Something has to change!"

Flores' lawsuit was filed Tuesday in Manhattan federal court. It is seeking class-action status and unspecified damages from the league, the Miami Dolphins, the Denver Broncos and the New York Giants, along with unidentified individuals.

The NFL, Dolphins, Broncos and Giants have denied Flores' accusations. In its statement, the NFL said it will defend "against these claims, which are without merit."

Rod Graves, executive director of the Fritz Pollard Alliance and a former general manager in the league, noted Flores' lawsuit is the latest call to action for the NFL and its team owners.

The Alliance, which fights for equity and inclusion in pro football, is named after a Black player and coach in the 1920s who is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

"Men and women of color in the NFL community have long known that the odds of advancing in the coaching ranks and in the front office are stacked against them," Graves said in a statement. "The Fritz Pollard Alliance supports coach Flores and others in their effort to level the playing field for men and women of color."

Flores, 40, was fired last month by Miami after leading the Dolphins to a 24-25 record over three years. They went 9-8 in their second straight winning season, but failed to make the playoffs during his tenure.

AP

Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross, left, walks off the field next to coach Brian Flores after the team's loss to the Atlanta Falcons in an NFL football game Oct. 24, 2021, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

According to the lawsuit, Dolphins owner Stephen Ross told Flores he would pay him $100,000 for every loss during the coach's first season because he wanted the club to "tank" so it could get the draft's top pick.

The lawsuit alleged that Ross then pressured Flores to recruit a prominent quarterback in violation of the league's tampering rules. When Flores refused, he was cast as the "angry Black man" who is difficult to work with and was derided until he was fired, the suit said.

Flores said he had conversations with general manager Chris Grier that Ross was upset that Miami was compromising its draft position by winning too many games. Flores said he also talked repeatedly with Ross, who said the team didn't need to win right then and the coach was under contract.

"That's not something you make up," Flores said of those conversations.

The Cleveland Browns refuted suggestions by former coach Hue Jackson and an associate that he was paid by the team to lose games, calling the claims "completely fabricated." Jackson, now coaching at Grambling, made several posts on Twitter inferring he received bonus payments from owner Jimmy Haslam while coaching Cleveland.

What drove Flores to file the lawsuit was a string of text messages with Patriots coach Bill Belichick three days before his scheduled Giants interview, leading Flores to believe Brian Daboll already had been chosen as the new coach.

"It was humiliating to be quite honest," Flores said. "There was disbelief, there was anger, there was a wave of emotion for a lot of reasons."

Anthony Lynn, a former Chargers head coach fired earlier this month as Lions offensive coordinator, said Wednesday he definitely understood Flores' feelings.

"He should not have been let go," Lynn said.

Since the NFL implemented the Rooney Rule in 2003 to boost hiring of minority coaches, 27 of 127 head coaching jobs have gone to minorities. This year, white men have filled the first four of nine head coaching jobs.

The rule requires teams to interview at least two external minority candidates for general manager/executive of football operations positions, head coach and all coordinator roles. At least one of those interviews must be held in-person for any head coach or general manager opening.

Dungy told The Associated Press last month Rooney's goal was to slow the hiring process down and investigate different candidates, creating a search process rather than an interview quota.

"My hope would be for owners to spell out very specifically what they're looking for and then have them really research a variety of people before making a decision," Dungy told the AP.

League loses its star, yet Brady's legacy lives on in NFL

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Tom Brady's retirement at age 44 leaves the NFL without its iconic quarterback, best player, biggest star and fiercest competitor.

With Brady deciding to focus on his family instead of football, the league loses a giant who flourished in a perfect storm of rules changes designed to protect passers, an increased focus on nutrition and personal offseason training and a dogged determination to thwart both logic and time.

Brady only got better with age and redefined greatness in an unparalleled career that seemed like it might go on forever.

And yet, it some ways he's not leaving us at all.

You'll see his imprint on the NFL whenever you tune into a football game, beginning with the Super Bowl on Feb. 13.

Like other young quarterbacks including Patrick Mahomes, Josh Allen, Justin Herbert, Dak Prescott and Lamar Jackson, Cincinnati's Joe Burrow came of age in the shadow of Brady's brilliance.

"And I guarantee you these young guys, they all admired something in Tom Brady that they attempted to put into their own game," said Brady's former teammate and cornerback Aqib Talib. "Whether it was his throwing motion, his competitiveness or how he took care of his body, some aspect of their game has something to do with Tom Brady.

"If you're an NFL quarterback anywhere from 20 to 30 years old right now, man you got a piece of Tom Brady in you, guaranteed."

That's why "the NFL is itself is going to be fine," concurred Hall of Famer Champ Bailey, whose 100-yard interception return handed Brady his first loss in 11 playoff games back in 2006.

"But I think what we're gonna miss is that level of consistency, professionalism, and nobody did it better," Bailey said. "I think a lot has to do with how he was raised. You know, it was him as a kid, his mindset, being around Bill Belichick and his mindset.

"And it's crazy how he had an MVP season and he's retiring. It's almost like Kobe hitting 60 and going out."

The last NFL player born in the 1970s went out on top — he's the defending Super Bowl champion until the Bengals or Rams hoist the Lombardi Trophy in two weeks.

Just think, Brady could already have a bust in Canton had he retired in his late 30s like his chief rival Peyton Manning did. But Brady went 70-24 in his 40s, winning his sixth Super Bowl with the Patriots and seventh one with the Buccaneers.

Brady led the NFL in yards passing (5,316), touchdown throws (43), completions (485) and attempts (719) in 2021, but the Buccaneers lost at home to the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round.

While the young quarterbacks try to forge their own legacy with Brady no longer in their way, it's a safe bet none will come close to his seven Super Bowl rings because there are so many good quarterbacks in his wake.

"I really do believe he's above the standard," Bailey said. "I don't see how a quarterback in the future would be more accomplished than he is. But the NFL will be fine. We got some great young talent and I'm sure Tom Brady would even say it himself. That divisional round was an unbelievable weekend of football.

"And it just goes to show you the quarterback talent is still there and probably even better than before," Bailey said. "And the funny thing is these guys all grew up watching Tom Brady. If these dudes do half of what he did it's a tremendous career."

It's not like it was all give and no take with Brady, who also took something from the vanguard of young quarterbacks coming into the league the last few years.

He embraced social media and endorsement opportunities he shunned earlier in his career, showing the public a softer, humorous, often sarcastic side that endeared him to millions who had always associated him with the scowling Belichick.

He became more beloved across the league much like Manning had in the twilight of his career that featured an epic 17 matchups with Brady.

"I think everybody enjoyed the old Tom Brady more than the young one," Bailey said. "What he did toward the end of his career was he engaged his fans. I think that's what was missing from a young Tom Brady. He was in this box and he never really came out.

"Now, I think that made him who he was, but his engagement level with fans increased 1 million percent in the past few years. And people really got to know him, saw he was hilarious at times. People appreciate you more when they can see you relaxed and having a good time."

Like when he tossed the Lombardi Trophy from one boat to another boat in the Bucs' Super Bowl celebration last year.

"I always knew Tom Brady was like that. He's sarcastic just like his social network was. That's his real personality. Yeah, just super sarcastic, super fun," Talib said.

"If you wanted to create the ultimate football player, you would create him just like Tom Brady."

NMIFA holds pair of coaching courses

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association continues to build local capacity as far as coaching education is concerned after holding a pair of courses recently at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Last Jan. 29, the NMIFA offered the Grassroots Kids Leader Coaching Course with 11 individuals attending the opening session conducted by course instructors Michiteru Mita, Jershwin Angeles, and Angie Ito. The course participants include Kelsey McClellan, Chang Yang Woo, Pritom Sen, Robait Ratol, Pia Ngewakl, Nishtah Thomas, Isaiah Barcinas, Britany Wally, Gideon Borja, Elaine Enriquez, and Kristanna Lim.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita, standing second left, gives pointers to participants in the NMIFA "D" License Coaching Course held last month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants in the Grassroots Kids Leader Coaching Course perform fun drills, while Northern Mariana Islands Football Association coach Mae Ito looks on during the practical session of the event last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The Grassroots Kids Leader is an entry level course and tailored to the NMI's grassroots soccer community, as it involves parents and volunteer coaches. Participants started with small sided games at the pitch for the first session, which focused on the most important factor in coaching at the grassroots level—having fun. They also had classroom discussions on introduction to football; NMI football development; guiding principles and child protection; basic first aid/injury prevention; nutrition; and grassroots football. The participants who are from Kanoa Football Club, Matansa, MP United, Paire, and William S. Reyes Elementary School will have to attend two more sessions, slated for March 4 and 5, to complete the course.

Meanwhile, eight individuals have completed the NMIFA "D" License Coaching Course last month.

MP United's Shawna Brennfleck and Dev Bachani, Kanoa's Joe Antonio and Andrew Sablan, Paire's Brian Lubao and Kathy Ruszala, Southern United's Nicole Lumbad, and TanHoldings' Tyana Hix attended the Jan. 16, 17, and 23 field and classroom sessions to earn their NMIFA "D" license.

In the three-part course, which also had Mita, Angeles, and Ito as instructors, coaches were given guidelines on properly organizing and conducting basic training sessions for youth players, particularly for those in the Under 12 age groups. The course concluded with a practical test where participants conducted training sessions for the Under 15 national training pool.

Better coaches, better players

Mita, who is also the NMIFA technical director, is pleased with the turnout from the two courses, as the association prepares to bring back competitions and soccer-related activities at the NMISTC possibly next month.

"Grassroots Kids football is our foundation for development. It is very important to have qualified coaches for us to further develop NMI football, and under the slogan 'Together we can shape the future in 2036' we need more family members and volunteers who can support our football development," said Mita.

He added that having better coaches help develop better players and to bring children to the program they must find the activities fun and safe.

"We aim to guide coaches to help players discover the fun part of football. Also, we share with the coaches our philosophy and guiding principles to provide a safety environment for the kids and when the environment is safe, parents and guardian are comfortable to leave their children to the coaches," Mita said.

"Most of coaches are national team players. They have the advantage in demonstrating techniques to kids. However, it is important to have adult coaches, too—like Shawna Brennfleck, Kathy Ruszala, Kelsey McClellan, and Britany Wally. They've been very active in our football community and have good experience in handling kids. Add to that the basic coaching knowledge they gained and you will see them moving forward to continue contributing to the development of football in the NMI," the official added. ***(PR)***

HOLLYWOOD

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Rex Susulin finished second to Camacho in the Big Boy ATV with 42 points followed by Henry Camacho Sr., also with 42 points.

In the Mini ATV, Theresa Borja took pole position after sweeping the heats for 50 points. Kassidy Camacho and Franchesca Yumul came in second and third with 42 points apiece. Kimason Cabrera and Keoni Rosario placed fourth and fifth with 36 points and 32 points, respectively.

Keoni Rosario came through in the Peewee ATV after finishing first with a perfect 50 points. Rosario was joined in the Top 3 by Rockson Cabrera and Brooklynn Susulin with 44 points and 40 points, respectively. Angel Ray Camacho (36 points) and Nakoa Torres (32 points) finished fourth and fifth.

In the newly added Intermediate Class, Corry Pangelinan took the checkered flag with 50 points. Tristan Sablan was second with 42 points, while Henry Camacho Jr. was third, also with 42 points. Melvin Cepeda (36 points), Byron Castro (32 points), David Camacho (28 points), A.J. Llagas (15 points), Joel Camacho (14 points), and Bruce Camacho (12 points) also competed in the division.

JOETEN

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encourage them to watch their friends or relatives play this summer, get inspired, and fill in those shoes one day," said Palacios, who also serves as manager of The Athlete's Foot Saipan

She added that aside from showing the best sports the region has to offer and giving a glimpse of island culture, the Mini Games will also give CNMI businesses a much-needed boost with the number of athletes and officials, their families, and spectators expected to arrive.

"This is also such an important event for the Northern Marianas, because not only is it the sports and family aspect about the Games, but also about the tourism that will be coming in. We've been fortunate for the past couple years with federal and local money circulating the economy. The Mini Games is a fresh, new, exciting way that is definitely going to add to that. We have about 20 countries participating in the Mini Games. People will be shopping, dining out, touring the islands, visiting museums, playing marine sports, so we all, fellow businesses, the government, the hosting organization, the community have to play our part and prepare for their arrival."

Palacios also said the $100,000 donation wouldn't have been possible without the vision of the late Jose C. Tenorio "Joeten" and his wife, the late Soledad T. Tenorio "DaiDai" in their mission of giving back to the community as well as the unending support of their business affiliates and subsidiaries.

In behalf of the Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee, chair Marco Peter thanked the Joeten Daidai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan for the very generous donation.

"We are humbled that Joeten Dai Dai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan have stepped forward for this historic event that'll be happening in the Marianas and not only today but in the past, Joeten Dai Dai and the Joeten family have always been supportive of the community…thank you again for being the first to sign up as a Platinum Sponsor and we look forward to a very successful Mini Games."

Organizing committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta seconded Peter in thanking the Joeten Dai Dai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan. He also extended his gratitude to the senior executives of Joeten Enterprises as well as its staff and management.

"Each of you play an important role in making this event successful. We are making history and you will be part of it… It's a lot work and it's a lot of fun also putting it together and I can't wait to avail of another sponsor," he said.

Babauta also alluded to the possibility of the Mini Games being broadcasted in the Olympics Channel which gives more exposure to generous sponsors like Joeten Dai Dai and The Athlete's Foot Saipan.

He also recognized Joeten is not only contributing monetarily to the success of the Mini Games, but Tenorio family members themselves are actively participating in the event either as athletes or organizers.

Babauta went on to name Somia Quan, who is president of the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association; Jose Quan, who is the treasurer of the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation, and Peter "Dung" Tenorio, who is part of the CNMI National Golf Team.

Joeten's legacy in supporting sports was pioneered by no less than the family's patriarch, Jose C. Tenorio, who Babauta said was a leading supporter of golf back in the day.

"From the bottom of our hearts, we want to extend to Joeten Dai Dai Foundation, Athletes Foot, and the Joeten Group of Companies a big thank you. I'm proud we are the hosts of the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, the best Games ever!"

LADY

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tributed the win to her players finally getting the rudiments of the sport.

"These young players love volleyball and they have improved a lot. I enjoy watching their enthusiasm and dedication. Practice, practice. When you love the sport you just need to practice to get better. They have the skills, we just need to sharpen them," she said.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in the community, the Public School System Athletic Program instituted new protocols for the 2021-2022 middle school season and it includes everyone at the venue, including players and coaches, having to mask up at all times.

"We are getting used to it. All they want to do is playing. They will do whatever it takes. They want to be protected and be sure they take all necessary precautions to stay healthy, also they don't want the league to be canceled," said Saiki when asked about the new COVID-19 mitigation measures.

The Lady Geckos I is made up of Lya Kim, Nara Kim, Giana Lang, Monica Miah, Suki Peng, Lina Tuskagoshi, Aubrey White, and Malia Rayphand.

The win gave SIS 1 a share of second place in Pool 1 with a 1-2 win-loss record, which ties them with TMS 1 and Francisco M. Sablan Middle School. Grace Christian Academy 2 currently leads the standings at 3-0, followed by 2-0 Hopwood I.

In Pool 2, GCA 1 is alone at the top at 2-0, followed by SIS and Saipan Community School at 1-0. TMS 2 (2-1), Hopwood 2 (1-1), MCS 1 (0-2), and DMS (0-3) also play in the pool.

MARK RABAGO

Saipan International School I players could only wave from afar to their counterparts from Mt. Carmel School II after their NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 game last Tuesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Kuzma, Dinwiddie lead Wizards to stunner past 76ers, 106-103

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Joeten signs up as Platinum Sponsor

MARK RABAGO

Executives from the Joeten Group of Companies join members of the Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee after Joeten Daidai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan formally signed up as a Platinum Sponsor of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 yesterday at the Joeten Motors Co. Ford-Honda showroom in Oleai.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

One of the largest locally owned companies in the CNMI has signed up as a Platinum Sponsor of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022.

In a simple ceremony yesterday at the Joeten Motors Co. Ford-Honda showroom in Oleai, the Joeten Daidai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan formally showed their support to the quadrennial event the CNMI will be hosting from June 17 to 25 this year by donating $100,000.

"I would like to say congratulations to the athletes who will be representing us in June. I am overjoyed and so proud that our islands, the Northern Marianas, is hosting the Pacific Mini Games this year. It's important to the Joeten Daidai Foundation and The Athlete's Foot Saipan to help support and promote our islands by encouraging health and wellness through these sporting events at the Mini Games," said Joeten Daidai Foundation executive director Patty T. Palacios.

She added that the Mini Games is also an amazing opportunity to showcase the CNMI's island pride.

"These events are significant to us because it gives inspiration to our children, the younger generation, to keep active lifestyles and strive for something more. So please

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Lady Geckos earn 1st win in middle school v-ball

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Saipan International School I scored its first win after three tries in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season last Tuesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Geckos I tasted victory following a 21-16, 21-8 walloping of Mt. Carmel School II in the third game of the day's triple-header. The loss was the second and two games for the Lady Knights II.

Earlier, Tanapag Middle School I triumphed via forfeit against Hopwood Middle School I in the south court, while Hopwood II fared better than its sister team after vanquishing Dandan Middle School, 21-18, 21-9, in the north court.

SIS I coach Mili Saiki at-

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'Hollywood' sweeps Big Boy ATV Class

By MARK RABAGO
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It was definitely "Groundhog Day" for Christian "Hollywood" Camacho after continuing his dominance in the Big Boy ATV Class of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

The 37-year-old IT&E employee, who won all six rounds last year with five via sweeps, topped the division anew by scoring a perfect 50 points.

"It feels good to start off strong in the season in points. I never know if I'll have a mechanical issue during a race throughout the season. So, starting off strong is always a good thing," said Camacho, who again took the refurbished course with his trusty 2019 Yamaha YFZ450R.

And speaking of the new course, Camacho said he digs the new jumps and the variation in the layout of the Cowtown Race Track.

"The new layout was good. Not too extreme, but extreme enough with safety for the other riders in mind. I'll need to practice and get in shape to gain back my stamina and continue winning motocross races though," he said.

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LAO ZHANG

Christian "Hollywood" Camacho flies high in the Big Boy ATV Class of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.